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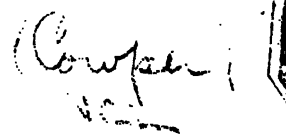
Poems 1800



POEMS,

BY

WILLIAM COWPER,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

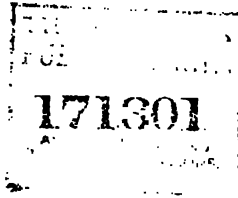
A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1800.

T. Bensley, Printer, Bolt Court, Fleet Street.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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE hiſtory of the following production is briefly this:—A lady, fond of blank verſe, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the SOFA for a ſubject. He obeyed; and, having much leiſure, connected another ſubject with it; and, purſuing the train of thought to which his ſituation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, inſtead of the trifle which he at firſt intended, a ſerious affair—a Volume!

In the Poem on the ſubject of Education, he would be very ſorry to ſtand ſuſpected of having aimed his cenſure at any parti-

cular ſchool. His objections are ſuch as naturally apply themſelves to ſchools in general. If there were not, as for the moſt part there is, wilful neglect in thoſe who manage them, and an omiſſion even of ſuch diſcipline as they are ſuſceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thouſand parents, mourning under the bittereſt of all diſappointments, atteſt the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the miſchief at large, and not with any particular inſtance of it.

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ERRATA.

Page 3, line 22, *for* umber, *read* lumber.
—— 271, —— 4, *for* Mrs. *read* Lady.

THE TASK,

A POEM.

BOOK I.

An alderman of Cripplegate contriv'd;
And ſome aſcribe th' invention to a prieſt
Burly and big, and ſtudious of his eaſe.
But, rude at firſt, and not with eaſy ſlope
Receding wide, they preſs'd againſt the ribs,
And bruis'd the ſide; and, elevated high,
Taught the rais'd ſhoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elaps'd or e'er our rugged ſires
Complain'd, though incommodiouſly pent in,
And ill at eaſe behind. The ladies firſt
'Gan murmur, as became the ſofter ſex.
Ingenious fancy, never better pleas'd
Than when employ'd t' accommodate the fair,
Heard the ſweet moan with pity, and devis'd
The ſoft ſettee; one elbow at each end,
And in the midſt an elbow, it receiv'd,
United yet divided, twain at once.
So ſit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
And ſo two citizens who take the air,
Cloſe pack'd, and ſmiling, in a chaiſe and one.
But relaxation of the languid frame,
By ſoft recumbency of outſtretch'd limbs,
Was bliſs reſerv'd for happier days. So ſlow
The growth of what is excellent; ſo hard
To attain perfection in this nether world.

Thus firſt neceſſity invented ſtools,
Convenience next ſuggeſted elbow-chairs,
And luxury th' accompliſh'd SOFA laſt.

The nurſe ſleeps ſweetly, hir'd to watch the ſick,
Whom ſnoring ſhe diſturbs. As ſweetly he
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour
To ſleep within the carriage more ſecure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet ſlēep enjoys the curate in his deſk,
The tedious rector drawling o'er his head;
And ſweet the clerk below. But neither ſleep
Of lazy nurſe, who ſnores the ſick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
To ſlumber in the carriage more ſecure,
Nor ſleep enjoy'd by curate in his deſk,
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are ſweet,
Compar'd with the repoſe the SOFA yields.

Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltleſs of pamper'd appetite obſcene)
From pangs arthritic, that infeſt the toe
Of libertine exceſs. The SOFA ſuits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
For I have lov'd the rural walk through lanes

Of graſſy ſwarth, cloſe cropt by nibbling ſheep,
And ſkirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have lov'd the rural walk
O'er hills, through vallies, and by rivers' brink,
E'er ſince a truant boy I paſs'd my bounds
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
And ſtill remember, nor without regret
Of hours that ſorrow ſince has much endear'd,
How oft, my ſlice of pocket ſtore conſum'd,
Still hung'ring pennyleſs and far from home,
I fed on ſcarlet hips and ſtony haws,
Or bluſhing crabs, or berries, that imboſs
The bramble, black as jet, or ſloes auſtere.
Hard fare! but ſuch as boyiſh appetite
Diſdains not; nor the palate, undeprav'd
By culinary arts, unſav'ry deems.
No SOFA then awaited my return;
Nor SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
His waſted ſpirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring ſhort fatigue; and, though our years
As life declines ſpeed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep;
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they ſpare;
Th' elaſtic ſpring of an unwearied foot

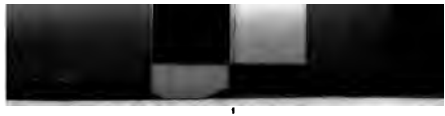
That mounts the ſtile with eaſe, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Reſpiring freely the freſh air, that makes
Swift pace or ſteep aſcent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My reliſh of fair proſpect; ſcenes that ſooth'd
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still ſoothing, and of pow'r to charm me ſtill.
And witneſs, dear companion of my walks,
Whoſe arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Faſt lock'd in mine, with pleaſure ſuch as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inſpire—
Witneſs a joy that thou haſt doubled long.
Thou know'ſt my praiſe of nature moſt ſincere,
And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
To ſerve occaſions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has ſlacken'd to a pauſe, and we have born
The ruffling wind, ſcarce conſcious that it blew,
While admiration, feeding at the eye,
And ſtill unſated, dwelt upon the ſcene.
Thence with what pleaſure have we juſt diſcern'd
The diſtant plough ſlow moving, and beſide
His lab'ring team, that ſwerv'd not from the track,

The ſturdy ſwain diminiſh'd to a boy!
Here Ouſe, ſlow winding through a level plain
Of ſpacious meads with cattle ſprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along its ſinuous courſe
Delighted. There, faſt rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms,
That ſcreen the herdſman's ſolitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the ſtream
That, as with molten glaſs, inlays the vale,
The ſloping land recedes into the clouds;
Diſplaying on its varied ſide the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberleſs, ſquare tow'r,
Tall ſpire, from which the ſound of cheerful bells
Juſt undulates upon the liſt'ning ear,
Groves, heaths, and ſmoking villages, remote.
Scenes muſt be beautiful which, daily view'd,
Pleaſe daily, and whoſe novelty ſurvives
Long knowledge and the ſcrutiny of years.
Praiſe juſtly due to thoſe that I deſcribe.

Nor rural ſights alone, but rural ſounds,
Exhilarate the ſpirit, and reſtore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
That ſweep the ſkirt of ſome far-ſpreading wood
Of ancient growth, make muſic not unlike
The daſh of ocean on his winding ſhore,

And lull the ſpirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blaſt,
And all their leaves faſt flutt'ring, all at once.
Nor leſs compoſure waits upon the roar
Of diſtant floods, or on the ſofter voice
Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that ſlip
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall
Upon looſe pebbles, loſe themſelves at length
In matted graſs, that with a livelier green
Betrays the ſecret of their ſilent courſe.
Nature inanimate employs ſweet ſounds,
But animated nature ſweeter ſtill,
To ſooth and ſatisfy the human ear.
Ten thouſand warblers cheer the day, and one
The live-long night: nor theſe alone, whoſe notes
Nice finger'd art muſt emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that ſwim ſublime
In ſtill repeated circles, ſcreaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and ev'n the boding owl
That hails the riſing moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themſelves and harſh,
Yet heard in ſcenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, pleaſe highly for their ſake.

Peace to the artiſt, whoſe ingenious thought
Devis'd the weather-houſe, that uſeful toy!



Fearleſs of humid air and gathering rains,
Forth ſteps the man—an emblem of myſelf!
More delicate, his tim'rous mate retires.
When Winter ſoaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to ſtruggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are beſt at home,
The taſk of new diſcov'ries falls on me.
At ſuch a ſeaſon, and with ſuch a charge,
Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we ſince repair:
'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but cloſe
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itſelf unſeen
Peeps at the vale below; ſo thick beſet
With foliage of ſuch dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peaſant's neſt*.
And, hidden as it is, and far remote
From ſuch unpleaſing ſounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Inceſſant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clam'rous whether pleas'd or pain'd,
Oft have I wiſh'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have ſaid, at leaſt I ſhould poſſeſs
The poet's treaſure, ſilence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and ſecure.
[redacted] thought! the dweller in that ſtill retreat

Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated ſcite forbids the wretch
To drink ſweet waters of the cryſtal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And, heavy-laden, brings his bev'rage home,
Far fetch'd and little worth; nor ſeldom waits,
Dependant on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and ſad, and his laſt cruſt conſum'd.
So farewell envy of the *peaſant's neſt!*
If ſolitude make ſcant the means of life,
Society for me!—thou ſeeming ſweet,
Be ſtill a pleaſing object in my view;
My viſit ſtill, but never mine abode.

Not diſtant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us. Monument of ancient taſte,
Now ſcorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a ſcreen
From ſultry ſuns: and, in their ſhaded walks
And long protracted bow'rs, enjoy'd at noon
The gloom and coolneſs of declining day.
We bear our ſhades about us; ſelf-depriv'd
Of other ſcreen, the thin umbrella ſpread,
And range an Indian waſte without a tree.

Thanks to * Benevolus—he ſpares me yet
Theſe cheſnuts rang'd in correſponding lines;
And, though himſelf ſo poliſh'd, ſtill reprieves
The obſolete prolixity of ſhade.

Deſcending now (but cautious, leſt too faſt)
A ſudden ſteep, upon a ruſtic bridge
We paſs a gulph, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, ſtooping as if to drink.
Hence, ancle deep in moſs and flow'ry thyme,
We mount again, and feel at ev'ry ſtep
Our foot half ſunk in hillocks green and ſoft,
Rais'd by the mole, the miner of the ſoil.
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth; and, plotting in the dark,
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the miſchiefs he has done.

The ſummit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride ſecures
The grand retreat from injuries impreſs'd
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The pannels, leaving an obſcure, rude name,

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Eſq. of Weſton Underwood.

In characters uncouth, and ſpelt amiſs.
So ſtrong the zeal t' immortalize himſelf
Beats in the breaſt of man, that e'en a few
Few tranſient years, won from th' abyſs abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion, ſeem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;
And, poſted on this ſpeculative height,
Exults in its command. The ſheep-fold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At firſt, progreſſive as a ſtream, they ſeek
The middle field; but, ſcatter'd by degrees,
Each to his choice, ſoon whiten all the land.
There, from the ſun-burnt hay-field, homeward creeps
The loaded wain; while, lighten'd of its charge,
The wain that meets it paſſes ſwiftly by;
The booriſh driver leaning o'er his team
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
Nor leſs attractive is the woodland ſcene,
Diverſified with trees of ev'ry growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the gray ſmooth trunks
Of aſh, or lime, or beech, diſtinctly ſhine,
Within the twilight of their diſtant ſhades;
There, loſt behind a riſing ground, the wood
Seems ſunk, and ſhorten'd to its topmoſt boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler ſome,

Thump after thump reſounds the conſtant flail,
That ſeems to ſwing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the deſtin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff.
The ruſtling ſtraw ſends up a frequent miſt
Of atoms, ſparkling in the noon-day beam.
Come hither, ye that preſs your beds of down,
And ſleep not; ſee him ſweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curſe,
But ſoften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaſeleſs action all that is ſubſiſts.
Conſtant rotation of th' unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An inſtant's pauſe, and lives but while ſhe moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for uſe,
Elſe noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and ſtreams,
All feel the freſh'ning impulſe, and are cleans'd
By reſtleſs undulation: even the oak
Thrives by the rude concuſſion of the ſtorm:
He ſeems indeed indignant, and to feel
Th' impreſſion of the blaſt with proud diſdain,
Frowning, as if in his unconſcious arm

He held the thunder: but the monarch owes
His firm ſtability to what he ſcorns—
More fixt below, the more diſturb'd above.
The law, by which all creatures elſe are bound,
Binds man the lord of all. Himſelf derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cauſe,
From ſtrenuous toil his hours of ſweeteſt eaſe.
The ſedentary ſtretch their lazy length
When cuſtom bids, but no refreſhment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deſerted of its bloom, the flaccid, ſhrunk,
And wither'd muſcle, and the vapid ſoul,
Reproach their owner with that love of reſt
To which he forfeits ev'n the reſt he loves.
Not ſuch th' alert and active. Meaſure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And their's alone ſeems worthy of the name.
Good health, and, its aſſociate in moſt,
Good temper; ſpirits prompt to undertake,
And not ſoon ſpent, though in an arduous taſk;
The pow'rs of fancy and ſtrong thought are their's;
Ev'n age itſelf ſeems privileg'd in them,
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A ſparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The vet'ran ſhows, and, gracing a gray beard

With youthful ſmiles, deſcends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almoſt without decay.

Like a coy maiden, eaſe, when courted moſt,
Fartheſt retires—an idol, at whoſe ſhrine
Who oft'neſt ſacrifice are favour'd leaſt.
The love of Nature, and the ſcenes ſhe draws,
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there ſhould be ſo
Who, ſelf-impriſon'd in their proud ſaloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unſcented fictions of the loom;
Who, ſatisfied with only pencil'd ſcenes,
Preſer to the performance of a God
Th' inferior wonders of an artiſt's hand!
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art;
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire—
None more admires—the painter's magic ſkill,
Who ſhows me that which I ſhall never ſee,
Conveys a diſtant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on Engliſh walls:
But imitative ſtrokes can do no more
Than pleaſe the eye—ſweet Nature ev'ry ſenſe.
The air ſalubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And muſic of her woods—no works of man
May rival theſe; theſe all beſpeak a pow'r

Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renew'd;
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light:
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue;
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires;
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of ev'ry breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endur'd
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflam'd
With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
To gaze at nature in her green array,
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire;
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,

And ſullen ſadneſs, that o'erſhade, diſtort,
And mar, the face of beauty, when no cauſe
For ſuch immeaſurable wo appears,
Theſe Flora baniſhes, and gives the fair
Sweet ſmiles, and bloom leſs tranſient than her ow
It is the conſtant revolution, ſtale
And taſteleſs, of the ſame repeated joys,
That palls and ſatiates, and makes languid life
A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health ſuffers, and the ſpirits ebb; the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feaſt
Is famiſh'd—finds no muſic in the ſong,
No ſmartneſs in the jeſt; and wonders why.
Yet thouſands ſtill deſire to journey on,
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and ſhuffle, to divide and ſort,
Her mingled ſuits and ſequences; and ſits,
Spectatreſs both and ſpectacle, a ſad
And ſilent cypher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between ſupporters; and, once ſeated, ſit,
Through downright inability to riſe,
Till the ſtout bearers lift the corpſe again.
Theſe ſpeak a loud memento. Yet ev'n theſe

Themſelves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent to a twig.
They love it, and yet loath it; fear to die,
Yet ſcorn the purpoſes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The ſlaviſh dread of ſolitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorſe, the fear of ſhame,
And their invet'rate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boaſt of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, ſaturate with dew,
Beneath the roſy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day ſpring overſhoot his humble neſt.
The peaſant too, a witneſs of his ſong,
Himſelf a ſongſter, is as gay as he.
But ſave me from the gaiety of thoſe
Whoſe head-aches nail them to a noon-day bed;
And ſave me too from their's whoſe haggard eyes
Flaſh deſperation, and betray their pangs
For property ſtripp'd off by cruel chance;
From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blaſphemy, the heart with wo.

The earth was made ſo various, that the mind

THE TASK.

ſtudious of change,
novelty, might be indulg'd.
r lovely, may be ſeen
autles fade; the weary ſight,
ated with their ſmiles, ſlides off,
ing leſs familiar ſcenes.
ſures in the ſhelter'd vale,
: hedges intercept the eye,
appy to renounce awhile,
of its charms, what ſtill we love,
ort abſence may endear it more.
, or the ſavage rock, may pleaſe,
he ſea-mew in his hollow cleft
each of man. His hoary head,
s many a league, the mariner,
neward, and in hope already there,
h three cheers exulting. At his waiſt
of half-wither'd ſhrubs he ſhows,
ds feet the baffled billows die.
mmon, overgrown with fern, and rough
ickly gorſe, that, ſhapeleſs and deform'd,
ng'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
ſelf with ornaments of gold,
where the turf

And fungous fruits of earth, regales the ſenſe
With luxury of unexpected ſweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of ſatin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with ſplendid ribband bound.
A ſerving maid was ſhe, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to ſea, and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To diſtant ſhores; and ſhe would ſit and weep
At what a ſailor ſuffers; fancy, too,
Deluſive moſt where warmeſt wiſhes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of tranſports ſhe was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
And never ſmil'd again! and now ſhe roams
The dreary waſte; there ſpends the livelong day,
And there, unleſs when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tatter'd ſtill; and both but ill conceal
A boſom heav'd with never-ceaſing ſighs.
She begs an idle pin of all the meets,
And hoards them in her ſleeve; but needful food,
Though preſs'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, aſks never.—Kate is crazed.

I ſee a column of ſlow riſing ſmoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that ſkirts the wild.
A vagabond and uſeleſs tribe there eat
Their miſerable meal. A kettle, ſlung
Between two poles upon a ſtick tranſverſe,
Receives the morſel—fleſh obſcene of dog,
Or vermin, or, at beſt, of cock purloin'd
From his accuſtom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, juſt ſaves unque
The ſpark of life. The ſportive winds blow wide
Their flutt'ring rags, and ſhows a tawny ſkin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great ſkill have they in palmiſtry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthleſs droſs into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they ſteal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and caſt
In human mould, ſhould brutalize by choice
His nature; and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit, and himſelf,
Self-baniſh'd from ſociety, prefer
Such ſqualid ſloth to honourable toil!
Yet even theſe, though, feigning ſickneſs oft,
They ſwathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their fleſh with artificial ſores,

Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When ſafe occaſion offers; and, with dance,
And muſic of the bladder and the bag,
Beguile their woes, and make the woods reſound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houſeleſs rovers of the ſylvan world;
And, breathing wholeſome air, and wand'ring much,
Need other phyſic none to heal th' effects
Of loathſome diet, penury, and cold.

Bleſt he, though undiſtinguiſh'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells ſecure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aſide
His fierceneſs, having learnt, though ſlow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many; but ſupply
Is obvious, plac'd within the eaſy reach
Of temp'rate wiſhes and induſtrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper ſoil;
Not rude and ſurly, and beſet with thorns,
And terrible to ſight, as when ſhe ſprings
(If e'er ſhe ſpring ſpontaneous) in remote
And barb'rous climes, where violence prevails,
And ſtrength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tam'd, by liberty refreſh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matur'd.

War and the chaſe engroſs the ſavage whole;
War follow'd for revenge, or to ſupplant
The envied tenants of ſome happier ſpot,
The chaſe for ſuſtenance, precarious truſt!
His hard condition with ſevere conſtraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wiſdom, proves a ſchool in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean ſelf-attachment, and ſcarce aught beſide.
Thus fare the ſhiv'ring natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the weſtern world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards th' antarctic. Ev'n the favour'd iſles,
So lately found, although the conſtant ſun
Cheer all their ſeaſons with a grateful ſmile,
Can boaſt but little virtue; and, inert
Through plenty, loſe in morals what they gain
In manners—victims of luxurious eaſe.
Theſe therefore I can pity, plac'd remote
From all that ſcience traces, art invents,
Or inſpiration teaches; and encloſed
In boundleſs oceans, never to be paſs'd
By navigators uninform'd as they,
Or plough'd perhaps by Britiſh bark again:
But, far beyond the reſt, and with moſt cauſe,

entle * ſavage! whom no love of thee
, but curioſity perhaps,
ain glory, prompted us to draw
om thy native bow'rs, to ſhew thee here
at ſuperior ſkill we can abuſe
s of Providence, and ſquander life.
am is paſt; and thou haſt found again
oas and bananas, palms and yams,
neſtall thatch'd with leaves. But haſt thou found
rmer charms? And, having ſeen our ſtate,
ices, our ladies, and our pomp
age, our gardens, and our ſports,
rd our muſic; are thy ſimple friends,
ple fare, and all thy plain delights,
to thee as once? And have thy joys
aing by compariſon with our's?
thou art, (for we return'd thee rude
rant, except of outward ſhow)
think thee yet ſo dull of heart
itleſs, as never to regret
ſted here, and left as ſoon as known.
s I ſee thee ſtraying on the beach,
ng of the ſurge that bathes thy foot
has waſh'd our diſtant ſhore.
weep, and thine are honeſt tears,

* Omia.

A patriot's for his country: thou art ſad
At thought of her forlorn and abject ſtate,
From which no pow'r of thine can raiſe her up.
Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little when ſhe paints thee thus.
She tells me, too, that duly ev'ry morn
Thou climb'ſt the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waſte
For ſight of ſhip from England. Ev'ry ſpeck
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at laſt the dull and duſky eve,
And ſends thee to thy cabin, well-prepar'd
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Diſintereſted good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
And muſt be brib'd, to compaſs earth again,
By other hopes and richer fruits than your's.

But, though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial ſoil of cultivated life
Thrive moſt, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft: in proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,

As to a common and moſt noiſome ſew'r,
The dregs and feculence of ev'ry land.
In cities foul example on moſt minds
Begets its likeneſs. Rank abundance breeds
In groſs and pamper'd cities ſloth and luſt,
And wantonneſs and glutonous exceſs.
In cities vice is hidden with moſt eaſe,
Or ſeen with leaſt reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapſe, can hope no triumph there
Beyond th' achievement of ſucceſsful flight.
I do confeſs them nurs'ries of the arts,
In which they flouriſh moſt; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect ſize.
Such London is, by taſte and wealth proclaim'd
The faireſt capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worſt.
There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature ſees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a ſtone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chiſſel occupy alone
The pow'rs of ſculpture, but the ſtyle as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice inciſion of her guided ſteel

She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a ſoil
So ſterile with what charms ſoe'er ſhe will,
The richeſt ſcen'ry and the loveliеſt forms.
Where finds philoſophy her eagle eye,
With which ſhe gazes at yon burning diſk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his ſpots?
In London: where her implements exact,
With which ſhe calculates, computes, and ſcans,
All diſtance, motion, magnitude, and now
Meaſures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce ſuch a mart,
So rich, ſo throng'd, ſo drain'd, and ſo ſupplied,
As London—opulent, enlarg'd, and ſtill
Increaſing, London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than ſhe,
A more accompliſh'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praiſe. Now mark a ſpot or two,
That ſo much beauty would do well to purge;
And ſhow this queen of cities, that ſo fair
May yet be foul; ſo witty, yet not wiſe.
It is not ſeemly, nor of good report,
That ſhe is ſlack in diſcipline; more prompt
T' avenge than to prevent the breach of law:
That ſhe is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life

And liberty, and oft-times honour too,
To peculators of the public gold:
That thieves at home must hang; but he, that puts
Into his overgorg'd and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presum'd t' annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God;
Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
And cent'ring all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorc'd.

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves?
Possess ye, therefore, ye, who, born about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only can ye shine;

There only minds like your's can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to conſole at noon
The penſive wand'rer in their ſhades. At eve
The moon-beam, ſliding ſoftly in between
The ſleeping leaves, is all the light they wiſh,
Birds warbling all the muſic. We can ſpare
The ſplendour of your lamps; they but eclipſe
Our ſofter ſatellite. Your ſongs confound
Our more harmonious notes: the thruſh departs
Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public miſchief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly ſuch as your's,
Grac'd with a ſword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, ſtedfaſt but for you,
A mutilated ſtructure, ſoon to fall.

THE TASK.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book.—Peace among the nations recommended, on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow.—Prodigies enumerated.—Sicilian earthquakes.—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin.—God the agent in them.—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved.—Our own late miscarriages accounted for.—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau.—But the pulpit, not satire the proper engine of reformation.—The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons.—Petit-maitre parson.—The good preacher.—Pictures of a theatrical clerical coxcomb.—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved.—Apostrophe to popular applause.—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with.—Sum of the whole matter.—Effects of sarcedotal mismanagement on the laity.—Their folly and extravagance.—The mischiefs of profusion.—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

THE TASK.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

a for a lodge in ſome vaſt wilderneſs,
ne boundleſs contiguity of ſhade,
ere rumour of oppreſſion and deceit,
unſucceſsful or ſucceſsful war,
ght never reach me more. My ear is pain'd,
ſoul is ſick, with every day's report
wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
ere is no fleſh in man's obdurate heart,
loes not feel for man; the nat'ral bond
brotherhood is ſever'd as the flax
at falls aſunder at the touch of fire.
finds his fellow guilty of a ſkin
t colour'd like his own; and, having pow'r

T' enforce the wrong, for ſuch a worthy cauſe
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands interſected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd
Make enemies of nations, who had elſe,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and deſtroys;
And, worſe than all, and moſt to be deplor'd,
As human nature's broadeſt, foulеſt blot,
Chains him, and taſks him, and exacts his ſweat
With ſtripes, that mercy, with a bleeding heart,
Weeps when ſhe ſees inflicted on a beaſt.
Then what is man? And what man, ſeeing this,
And having human feelings, does not bluſh,
And hang his head, to think himſelf a man?
I would not have a ſlave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I ſleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That ſinews bought and ſold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Juſt eſtimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myſelf the ſlave,
And wear the bonds, than faſten them on him.
We have no ſlaves at home—Then why abroad?
And they themſelves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.

as cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
ive our air, that moment they are free;
touch our country, and their ſhackles fall.
's noble, and beſpeaks a nation proud
jealous of the bleſſing. Spread it then,
let it circulate through ev'ry vein
ll your empire; that where Britain's pow'r
lt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

re there is need of ſocial intercourſe,
volence, and peace, and mutual aid,
een the nations, in a world that ſeems
oll the death-bell of its own deceaſe,
by the voice of all its elements
reach the gen'ral doom *. When were the winds
lip with ſuch a warrant to deſtroy?
n did the waves ſo haughtily o'erleap
r ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
from beneath, and meteors † from above,
ntous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
kindled beacons in the ſkies; and th' old
crazy earth has had her ſhaking fits
frequent, and foregone her uſual reſt.

* Alluding to the calamities at Jamaica.
† Auguſt 18, 1783.

Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature * with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all? But grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve
And stand expos'd by common peccancy
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.

Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause;
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works his dreadful part alone.
How does the earth receive him?—With what signs

* Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

Of gratulation and delight, her king?
Pours ſhe not all her choiceſt fruits abroad,
Her ſweeteſt flow'rs, her aromatic gums,
Diſcloſing paradiſe where'er he treads?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders, through a thouſand deeps
And fiery caverns roars beneath his foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains ſmoke,
For he has touch'd them. From th' extremeſt point
Of elevation down into th' abyſs
His wrath is buſy, and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong, and the vallies riſe,
The rivers die into offenſive pools,
And, charg'd with putrid verdure, breathe a groſs
And mortal nuiſance into all the air.
What ſolid was, by transformation ſtrange,
Grows fluid; and the fixt and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and ſwells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey inſatiable. Immenſe
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on ev'ry ſide,
And fugitive in vain. The ſylvan ſcene
Migrates uplifted; and, with all its ſoil
Alighting in far diſtant fields, finds out

Happy the man who ſees a God employ'd
In all the good and ill that chequer life!
Reſolving all events, with their effects
And manifold reſults, into the will
And arbitration wiſe of the Supreme.
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The leaſt of our concerns (ſince from the leaſt
The greateſt oft originate); could chance
Find place in his dominion, or diſpoſe
One lawleſs particle to thwart his plan;
Then God might be ſurpris'd, and unforeſeen
Contingence might alarm him, and diſturb
The ſmooth and equal courſe of his affairs.
This truth philoſophy, though eagle-eyed
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
And, having found his inſtrument, forgets,
Or diſregards, or more preſumptuous ſtill,
Denies the pow'r that wields it. God proclaims
His hot diſpleaſure againſt fooliſh men,
That live an atheiſt life: involves the heav'n
In tempeſts: quits his graſp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the ſkin,
And putrify the breath of blooming health.
He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his ſhrivel'd lips,

And taints the golden ear. He ſprings his mines,
And deſolates a nation at a blaſt.
Forth ſteps the ſpruce philoſopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and diſcordant ſprings
And principles; of cauſes, how they work
By neceſſary laws their ſure effects;
Of action and re-action. He has found
The ſource of the diſeaſe that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and baniſh fear.
Thou fool! will thy diſcovery of the cauſe
Suſpend th' effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means ſince firſt he made the world?
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation leſs
Than a capacious reſervoir of means
Form'd for his uſe, and ready at his will?
Go, dreſs thine eyes with eye-ſalve; aſk of him,
Or aſk of whomſoever he has taught;
And learn, though late, the genuine cauſe of all.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee ſtill—
My country! and, while yet a nook is left
Where Engliſh minds and manners may be found,
Shall be conſtrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year moſt part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a froſt,

I would not yet exchange thy ſullen ſkies,
And fields without a flow'r, for warmer Franc
With all her vines; nor for Auſonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.
To ſhake thy ſenate, and from heights ſublim
Of patriot eloquence to flaſh down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my taſk:
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and ſorrows, with as true a heart
As any thund'rer there. And I can feel
Thy follies, too; and with a juſt diſdain
Frown at effeminates, whoſe very looks
Reflect diſhonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of ſoldierſhip and ſenſe,
Should England proſper, when ſuch things, as
And tender as a girl, all eſſenc'd o'er
With odours, and as profligate as ſweet;
Who ſell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they ſhould fight; when ſuch
Preſume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cauſe?
Time was when it was praiſe and boaſt enoug
In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children. Praiſe enou
To fill th' ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother ton

And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell thoſe honours, and farewell with them
The hope of ſuch hereafter! They have fall'n
Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of ſmiling victory that moment won,
And Chatham heart-ſick of his country's ſhame!
They made us many ſoldiers. Chatham, ſtill
Conſulting England's happineſs at home,
Secur'd it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put ſo much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were ſwift to follow whom all lov'd.
Thoſe ſuns are ſet. Oh, riſe ſome other ſuch!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and deſpair of new.

Now hoiſt the ſail, and let the ſtreamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and ſprinkle liquid ſweets,
That no rude ſavour maritime invade
The noſe of nice nobility! Breathe ſoft,
Ye clarionets; and ſofter ſtill, ye flutes;
That winds and waters, lull'd by magic ſounds,
May bear us ſmoothly to the Gallic ſhore!

Be loudeſt in their praiſe who do no more.
Yet what can ſatire, whether grave or gay?
It may correct a foible, may chaſtiſe
The freaks of faſhion, regulate the dreſs,
Retrench a ſword-blade, or diſplace a patch;
But where are its ſublimer trophies found?
What vice has it ſubdu'd? whoſe heart reclaim'd
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
Alas! Leviathan is not ſo tam'd:
Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and, ſtricken hard,
Turns to the ſtroke his adamantine ſcales,
That fear no diſcipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore (and I name it fill'd
With ſolemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
The pulpit (when the ſat'riſt has at laſt,
Strutting and vap'ring in an empty ſchool,
Spent all his force and made no proſelyte)—
I ſay the pulpit (in the ſober uſe
Of its legitimate, peculiar pow'rs)
Muſt ſtand acknowledg'd, while the world ſhall ſtand,
The moſt important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament, of virtue's cauſe.
There ſtands the meſſenger of truth: there ſtands
The legate of the ſkies!—His theme divine,

His office ſacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law ſpeaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in ſtrains as ſweet
As angels uſe, the goſpel whiſpers peace.
He ſtabliſhes the ſtrong, reſtores the weak,
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himſelf in panoply complete
Of heav'nly temper, furniſhes with arms,
Bright as his own, and trains, by ev'ry rule
Of holy diſcipline, to glorious war,
The ſacramental hoſt of God's elect!
Are all ſuch teachers?—would to heav'n all were!
But hark—the doctor's voice!—faſt wedg'd between
Two empirics he ſtands, and with ſwoln cheeks
Inſpires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and, defying ſhame,
Announces to the world his own and their's!
He teaches thoſe to read, whom ſchools diſmiſs'd,
And colleges, untaught; ſells accent, tone,
And emphaſis in ſcore, and gives to pray'r
Th' *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern uſe; transforms old print
To zig-zag manuſcript, and cheats the eyes

Of gall'ry critics by a thouſand arts.
Are there who purchaſe of the doctor's ware?
Oh, name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,
That grave and learned clerks ſhould need ſuch aid.
He doubtleſs is in ſport, and does but droll,
Aſſuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and dry-nurſe of the church!

I venerate the man whoſe heart is warm,
Whoſe hands are pure, whoſe doctrine and whoſe life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honeſt in the ſacred cauſe.
To ſuch I render more than mere reſpect,
Whoſe actions ſay that they reſpect themſelves.
But, looſe in morals, and in manners vain,
In converſation frivolous, in dreſs
Extreme, at once repacious and profuſe;
Frequent in park with lady at his ſide,
Ambling and prattling ſcandal as he goes;
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen, ſave when he ſcrawls a card;
Conſtant at routs, familiar with a round
Of ladyſhips—a ſtranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well-prepar'd, by ignorance and ſloth,
By infidelity and love of world,

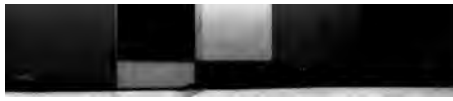
To make God's work a ſinecure; a ſlave
To his own pleaſures and his patron's pride:
From ſuch apoſtles, oh, ye mitred heads,
Preſerve the church! and lay not careleſs hands
On ſculls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I deſcribe a preacher, ſuch as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own—
Paul ſhould himſelf direct me. I would trace
His maſter-ſtrokes, and draw from his deſign.
I would expreſs him ſimple, grave, ſincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, ſolemn, chaſte,
And natural in geſture; much impreſs'd
Himſelf, as conſcious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in addreſs, as well becomes
A meſſenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the roſtrum with a ſkip,
And then ſkip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry—hem; and, reading what they never wrote,
Juſt fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whiſper cloſe the ſcene!

In man or woman, but far moſt in man,
And moſt of all in man that miniſters
And ſerves the altar, in my ſoul I loath
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect ſcorn;
Object of my implacable diſguſt.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A ſilly fond conceit of his fair form,
And juſt proportion, faſhionable mien,
And pretty face, in preſence of his God?
Or will he ſeek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the di'mond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, proſtitutes and ſhames
His noble office, and, inſtead of truth,
Diſplaying his own beauty, ſtarves his flock!
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and ſtare,
And ſtart theatric, practis'd at the glaſs!
I ſeek divine ſimplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all beſides,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd
By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform'd,
To me is odious as the naſal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Miſled by cuſtom, ſtrain celeſtial themes

Through the preſt noſtril, ſpectacle-beſtrid.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
That taſk perform'd, relapſe into themſelves;
And, having ſpoken wiſely, at the cloſe
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye—
Whoe'er was edified, themſelves were not!
Forth comes the pocket mirror.—Firſt we ſtroke
An eye-brow; next, compoſe a ſtraggling lock;
Then with an air, moſt gracefully perform'd,
Fall back into our ſeat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its eaſe with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand depending low:
The better hand, more buſy, gives the noſe
Its bergamot, or aids th' indebted eye
With op'ra glaſs, to watch the moving ſcene,
And recognize the ſlow-retiring fair.—
Now this is fulſome; and offends me more
Than in a churchman ſlovenly neglect
And ruſtic coarſeneſs would. An heav'nly mind
May be indiff'rent to her houſe of clay,
And ſlight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body ſo fantaſtic, trim,
And quaint, in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge an heav'nly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negociates between God and man,



As God's ambaſſador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, ſhould beware
Of lightneſs in his ſpeech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you ſhould woo a ſoul;
'To break a jeſt, when pity would inſpire
Pathetic exhortation; and t' addreſs
The ſkittiſh fancy with facetious tales,
When ſent with God's commiſſion to the heart!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I conſent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till ſides and benches fail.
No: he was ſerious in a ſerious cauſe,
And underſtood too well the weighty terms
That he had ta'en in charge. He would not ſtoop
To conquer thoſe by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and ſoberneſs aſſail'd in vain.

Oh, popular applauſe! what heart of man
Is proof againſt thy ſweet ſeducing charms?
The wiſeſt and the beſt feel urgent need
Of all their caution in their gentleſt gales;
But, ſwell'd into a guſt—who then, alas!
With all his canvaſs ſet, and inexpert,
And therefore heedleſs, can withſtand thy pow'r?
Praiſe from the rivel'd lips of toothleſs, bald

Decrepitude; and in the looks of lean
And craving poverty; and in the bow
Reſpectful of the ſmutch'd artificer;
Is oft too welcome, and may much diſturb
The bias of the purpoſe. How much more,
Pour'd forth by beauty ſplendid and polite,
In language ſoft as adoration breathes?
Ah, ſpare your idol! think him human ſtill.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too!
Dote not too much, nor ſpoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the ſempiternal ſource
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,
Drew from the ſtream below. More favour'd, we
Drink, when we chooſe it, at the fountain head.
To them it flow'd much mingled and defil'd
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illuſive of philoſophy, ſo call'd,
But falſely. Sages after ſages ſtrove
In vain to filter off a cryſtal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc'd
The thirſt than ſlak'd it, and not ſeldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they puſh'd inquiry to the birth
And ſpring-time of the world; aſk'd, Whence is man?
Why form'd at all? and wherefore as he is?

Where muſt he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bleſs?
Or does he ſit regardleſs of his works?
Has man within him an immortal ſeed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he ſurvive
His aſhes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of ſolution, which alone
A Deity could ſolve. Their anſwers, vague,
And all at random, fabulous, and dark,
Left them as dark themſelves. Their rules of life,
Defective and unſanction'd, prov'd too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis revelation ſatisfies all doubts,
Explains all myſteries, except her own,
And ſo illuminates the path of life,
That fools diſcover it, and ſtray no more.
Now tell me, dignified and ſapient ſir,
My man of morals, nurtur'd in the ſhades
Of Academus—is this falſe or true?
Is Chriſt the abler teacher, or the ſchools?
If Chriſt, then why reſort at ev'ry turn
To Athens or to Rome, for wiſdom ſhort
Of man's occaſions, when in him reſide
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd ſtore?
How oft, when Paul has ſerv'd us with a text,

Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd!
that, if now alive, would fit content
humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
ch it who might. Such was their love of truth,
ir thirſt of knowledge, and their candour too!

nd thus it is.—The paſtor, either vain
ature, or by flatt'ry made ſo, taught
;aze at his own ſplendour, and t' exalt
irdly, not his office, but himſelf;
menlighten'd, and too proud to learn;
icious, and not therefore apt to teach;
erting often, by the ſtreſs of lewd
looſe example, whom he ſhould inſtruct;
ſes, and holds up to broad diſgrace,
nobleſt function, and diſcredits much
brighteſt truths that man has ever ſeen.
ghoſtly counſel; if it either fall
w the exigence, or be not back'd
h ſhow of love, at leaſt with hopeful proof
ome ſincerity on th' giver's part;
e diſhonour'd, in th' exterior form
mode of its conveyance, by ſuch tricks
nove deriſion, or by foppiſh airs
hiſtrionic mumm'ry, that let down
pulpit to the level of the ſtage;

Drops from the lips a diſregarded thing.
The weak perhaps are mov'd, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of ſtronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they ſee.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
Soon follows, and, the curb or conſcience ſnapt,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinc'd.

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one, ſo we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother church ſupplies,
Now make our own. Poſterity will aſk
(If e'er poſterity ſee verſe of mine)
Some fifty or an hundred luſtrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days?
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs muſt augur better things,
Since heav'n would ſure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like our's,
A monitor is wood—plank ſhaven thin.
We wear it at our backs. There, cloſely brac'd
And neatly fitted, it compreſſes hard
The prominent and moſt unſightly bones,
And binds the ſhoulders flat. We prove its uſe

n and moſt effectual to ſecure
, not now gymnaſtic as of yore,
ckets and diſtortion, elſe our lot.
us admoniſh'd, we can walk erect—
of at leaſt of manhood! while the friend
loſe, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
ith, coſtlier than Lucullus wore,
caprice as multiplied as his,
ſe us while the faſhion is at full,
nge with ev'ry moon. The ſycophant,
its to dreſs us, arbitrates their date;
his fair reverſion with keen eye;
e ill made, another obſolete,
s not nicely, that is ill conceiv'd;
aking prize of all that he condemns,
r expenditure defrays his own.
s the very ſpice of life,
ves it all its flavour. We have run
n ev'ry change that fancy at the loom,
ed, has had genius to ſupply;
udious of mutation ſtill, diſcard
legance, a little us'd,
iſtfous novelty and ſtrange diſguiſe.
ifice to dreſs, till houſehold joys
nforts ceaſe. Dreſs drains our cellar dry,
ps our larder lean; puts out our fires;

And introduces hunger, froſt, and wo,
Where peace and hoſpitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail t' exhibit at the public ſhows
A form as ſplendid as the proudeſt there,
Though appetite raiſe outcries at the coſt?
A man o' th' town dines late, but ſoon enough,
With reaſonable forecaſt and diſpatch,
T' inſure a ſide-box ſtation at half price.
You think, perhaps, ſo delicate his dreſs,
His daily fare is delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and, buſy as he ſeems,
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!
The rout is folly's circle, which ſhe draws
With magic wand. So potent is the ſpell,
That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unleſs by heaven's peculiar grace, eſcape.
There we grow early gray, but never wiſe;
There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
Solicit pleaſure, hopeleſs of ſucceſs;
Waſte youth in occupations only fit
For ſecond childhood, and devote old age
To ſports which only childhood could excuſe.
There they are happieſt who diſſemble beſt
Their wearineſs; and they the moſt polite
Who ſquander time and treaſure with a ſmile,

Though at their own deſtruction. She, that aſks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they leſs?)
Make juſt repriſals; and, with cringe and ſhrug,
And bow obſequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,
Whoſe flambeaux flaſh againſt the morning ſkies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they paſs,
To her who, frugal only that her thrift
May feel exceſſes ſhe can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlacquey'd; who, in haſte
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar huſbands, huſbands ſtarve their wives,
On fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their laſt poor pittance—fortune, moſt ſevere
Of goddeſſes yet known, and coſtlier far
Than all that held their routs in Juno's heav'n.—
So fare we in this priſon-houſe the world.
And 'tis a fearful ſpectacle to ſee
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links that hold them faſt
With eyes of anguiſh, execrate their lot,
Then ſhake them in deſpair, and dance again!

Now baſket up the family of plagues
That waſte our vitals; peculation, ſale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by ſubterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as num'rous and as keen
As the neceſſities their authors feel;
Then caſt them, cloſely bundled, ev'ry brat
At the right door. Profuſion is the ſire.
Profuſion unreſtrain'd, with all that's baſe
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred, within the mem'ry of no few,
A prieſthood ſuch as Baal's was of old,
A people ſuch as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives ſociety its beauty, ſtrength,
Convenience, and ſecurity, and uſe:
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp
And gibbetted as faſt as catchpole claws
Can ſeize the ſlipp'ry prey: unties the knot
Of union, and converts the ſacred band
That holds mankind together to a ſcourge.
Profuſion, deluging a ſtate with luſts
Of groſſeſt nature and of worſt effects,
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,
And warps, the conſciences of public men,

ill they can laugh at virtue; mock the fools
hat truſt them; and, in th' end, diſcloſe a face
hat would have ſhock'd credulity herſelf,
nmaſk'd, vouchſafing this their ſole excuſe—
nce all alike are ſelfiſh, why not they?
his does profuſion, and the accurſed cauſe
f ſuch deep miſchief has itſelf a cauſe.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
hen learning, virtue, piety, and truth,
ere precious, and inculcated with care,
ere dwelt a ſage call'd Diſcipline. His head,
ot yet by time completely ſilver'd o'er,
ſpoke him paſt the bounds of freakiſh youth,
t ſtrong for ſervice ſtill, and unimpair'd.
s eye was meek and gentle, and a ſmile
ay'd on his lips; and in his ſpeech was heard
ternal ſweetneſs, dignity, and love.
e occupation deareſt to his heart
as to encourage goodneſs. He would ſtroke
e head of modeſt and ingenuous worth,
at bluſh'd at its own praiſe; and preſs the youth
oſe to his ſide that pleas'd him. Learning grew,
neath his care, a thriving vig'rous plant;
e mind was well inform'd, the paſſions held
bordinate, and diligence was choice.

If e'er it chanc'd, as ſometimes chance it muſt,
That one among ſo many overleap'd
The limits of controul, his gentle eye
Grew ſtern, and darted a ſevere rebuke:
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with ſuch fits of awe
As left him not, till penitence had won
Loſt favóur back again, and clos'd the breach.
But Diſcipline, a faithful ſervant long,
Declin'd at length into the vale of years:
A palſy ſtruck his arm; his ſparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age; his voice, unſt
Grew tremulous, and mov'd deriſion more
Than rev'rence in perverſe rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend; and Diſcipline at length,
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell ſick and died.
Then ſtudy languiſh'd, emulation ſlept,
And virtue fled. The ſchools became a ſcene
Of ſolemn farce, where Ignorance in ſtilts,
His cap well lin'd with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue perform'd the ſcholar's part,
Proceeding ſoon a graduated dunce.
Then compromiſe had place, and ſcrutiny
Became ſtone blind; precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whoſe purſe was ſo.

A diſſolution of all bonds enſued;
The curbs invented for the muliſh mouth
Of head-ſtrong youth, were broken; bars and bolts
Grew ruſty by diſuſe; and maſſy gates
Forgot their office, op'ning with a touch;
Till gowns at length are found mere maſquerade,
The taſſell'd cap and the ſpruce band a jeſt,
A mock'ry of the world! What need of theſe
For gameſters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts, and booted ſportſmen, oft'ner ſeen
With belted waiſt and pointers at their heels
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot;
And ſuch expence as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the lib'ral hand of love,
Is ſquander'd in purſuit of idle ſports
And vicious pleaſures; buys the boy a name,
That ſits a ſtigma on his father's houſe,
And cleaves through life inſeparably cloſe
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world, that muſt receive him ſoon,
Add to ſuch erudition, thus acquir'd,
Where ſcience and where virtue are profeſs'd?
They may confirm his habits, rivet faſt
His folly, but to ſpoil him is a taſk

That bids defiance to th' united pow'rs
Of faſhion, diſſipation, taverns, ſtews.
Now, blame we moſt the nurſlings or the nurſe?
The children, crook'd, and twiſted, and deform'd,
Through want of care; or her, whoſe winking eye
And ſlumb'ring oſcitancy mars the brood?
The nurſe no doubt. Regardleſs of her charge,
She needs herſelf correction; needs to learn,
That it is dang'rous ſporting with the world,
With things ſo ſacred as a nation's truſt,
The nurture of her youth, her deareſt pledge.

All are not ſuch. I had a brother once—
Peace to the mem'ry of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too!
Of manners ſweet as virtue always wears,
When gay good-nature dreſſes her in ſmiles.
He grac'd a college *, in which order yet
Was ſacred; and was honour'd, lov'd, and wept,
By more than one, themſelves conſpicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mixt
With ſuch ingredients of good ſenſe and taſte
Of what is excellent in man, they thirſt
With ſuch a zeal to be what they approve,

* Ben'et Coll. Cambridge.

That no reſtraints can circumſcribe them more
Than they themſelves by choice, for wiſdom's ſake;
Nor can example hurt them: what they ſee
Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their juſt eſteem.
If ſuch eſcape contagion, and emerge
Pure, from ſo foul a pool, to ſhine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themſelves,
Small thanks to thoſe whoſe negligence or ſloth
Expos'd their inexperience to the ſnare,
And left them to an undirected choice.

See, then, the quiver broken and decay'd,
In which are kept our arrows! Ruſting there
In wild diſorder, and unfit for uſe,
What wonder if, diſcharg'd into the world,
They ſhame their ſhooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuſe, and feathers drunk with wine!
Well may the church wage unſucceſsful war,
With ſuch artill'ry arm'd. Vice parries wide
Th' undreaded volley with a ſword of ſtraw,
And ſtands an impudent and fearleſs mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birth-place and his dam? The country mourns—
Mourns, becauſe ev'ry plague that can infeſt

Society, and that ſaps and worms the baſis
Of th' edifice that policy has rais'd,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And ſuffocates the breath at ev'ry turn.
Profuſion breeds them; and the cauſe itſelf
Of that calamitous miſchief has been found:
Found, too, where moſt offenſive, in the ſkirts
Of the rob'd pedagogue! Elſe, let th' arraign'd
Stand up unconſcious, and refute the charge.
So, when the Jewiſh leader ſtretch'd his arm,
And wav'd his rod divine, a race obſcene,
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Ægypt: gardens, fields, and plains,
Were cover'd with the peſt; the ſtreets were fill'd;
The croaking nuiſance lurk'd in ev'ry nook;
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'ſcap'd;
And the land ſtunk—ſo num'rous was the fry.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Self-recollection and reproof.—Address to domestic happiness.—Some account of myself.—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise.—Justification of my censures.—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher.—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions.—Domestic happiness addressed again.—Few lovers of the country.—My tame hare.—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden—Pruning.—Framing.—Greenhouse.—Sowing of flower seeds.—The country preferable to the town even in the winter.—Reasons why it is deserted at that season—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement.—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

e who, long in thickets and in brakes
led, winds now this way and now that
ious courſe uncertain, ſeeking home;
ving long in miry ways been foil'd
re diſcomfited, from ſlough to ſlough
ig and half deſpairing of eſcape;
ce at length he find a greenſward ſmooth
ithful to the foot, his ſpirits riſe,
rups briſk his ear-erecting ſteed,
nds his way with pleaſure and with eaſe;
eſigning other themes, and call'd
n the Sofa with eulogium due,
its ſlumbers, and to paint its dreams,

Have rambled wide. In country, city, ſeat
Of academic fame (howe'er deſerv'd),
Long held, and ſcarcely diſengag'd at laſt.
But now, with pleaſant pace, a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myſelf at large,
Courageous and refreſh'd for future toil,
If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and ſounding boards reflect
Moſt part an empty ineffectual ſound,
What chance that I, to fame ſo little known,
Nor converſant with men or manners much,
Should ſpeak to purpoſe, or with better hope
Crack the ſatiric thong? 'Twere wiſer far
For me, enamour'd of ſequeſter'd ſcenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repoſe,
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or
My languid limbs, when ſummer ſears the plai
Or, when rough winter rages, on the ſoft
And ſhelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful heart
There, undiſturb'd by folly, and appriz'd
How great the danger of diſturbing her,
To muſe in ſilence, or at leaſt confine
Remarks that gall ſo many to the few
My partners in retreat. Diſguſt conceal'd

Is oft-times proof of wiſdom, when the fault
Is obſtinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domeſtic happineſs, thou only bliſs
Of Paradiſe that haſt ſurviv'd the fall!
Though few now taſte thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or, taſting, long enjoy thee; too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preſerve thy ſweets
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper ſheds into thy cryſtal cup.
Thou art the nurſe of virtue—in thine arms
She ſmiles, appearing, as in truth ſhe is,
Heav'n-born, and deſtin'd to the ſkies again.
Thou art not known where pleaſure is ador'd,
That reeling goddeſs with the zoneleſs waiſt
And wand'ring eyes, ſtill leaning on the arm
Of novelty, her fickle frail ſupport;
For thou art meek and conſtant, hating change,
And finding, in the calm of truth-tried love,
Joys that her ſtormy raptures never yield.
Forſaking thee, what ſhipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!
Till proſtitution elbows us aſide
In all our crowded ſtreets; and ſenates ſeem
Conven'd for purpoſes of empire leſs
Than to releaſe th' adultreſs from her bond.

Th' adultreſs! what a theme for angry verſe!
What provocation to th' indignant heart
That feels for injur'd love! but I diſdain
The nauſeous taſk to paint her as ſhe is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her ſhame!
No:—let her paſs, and, chariotted along
In guilty ſplendour, ſhake the public ways;
The frequency of crimes has waſh'd them white!
And verſe of mine ſhall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now, of character unſmirch'd,
And chaſte themſelves, are not aſham'd to own.
Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time,
Not to be paſs'd: and ſhe, that had renounc'd
Her ſex's honour, was renounc'd herſelf
By all that priz'd it; not for prud'ry's ſake,
But dignity's, reſentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif,
Deſirous to return, and not receiv'd;
But was an wholeſome rigour in the main,
And taught th' unblemiſh'd to preſerve with care
That purity, whoſe loſs was loſs of all.
Men, too, were nice in honour in thoſe days,
And judg'd offenders well. Then he that ſharp'd
And pocketted a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and ſhunn'd as odious. He that ſol
His country, or was ſlack when ſhe requir'd

His ev'ry nerve in action and at ſtretch,
Paid with the blood that he had baſely ſpar'd,
The price of his default. But now—yes, now
We are become ſo candid and ſo fair,
So lib'ral in conſtruction, and ſo rich
In Chriſtian charity, (good-natur'd age!)
That they are ſafe, ſinners of either ſex,
Tranſgreſs what laws they may. Well dreſs'd, well-bred,
Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough
To paſs us readily through ev'ry door.
Hypocriſy, deteſt her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet)
May claim this merit ſtill—that ſhe admits
The worth of what ſhe mimics with ſuch care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applauſe;
But ſhe has burnt her maſk, not needed here,
Where vice has ſuch allowance, that her ſhifts
And ſpecious ſemblances have loſt their uſe.

I was a ſtricken deer, that left the herd
Long ſince; with many an arrow deep infixt,
My panting ſide was charg'd, when I withdrew
To ſeek a tranquil death in diſtant ſhades.
There was I found by one who had himſelf
Been hurt by th' archers. In his ſide he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel ſcars.

With gentle force ſoliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live
Since then, with few aſſociates, in remote
And ſilent woods I wander, far from thoſe
My former partners of the peopled ſcene;
With few aſſociates, and not wiſhing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I ſee that all are wand'rers, gone aſtray
Each in his own deluſions; they are loſt
In chaſe of fancied happineſs, ſtill woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream enſues;
And ſtill they dream that they ſhall ſtill ſucceed,
And ſtill are diſappointed. Rings the world
With the vain ſtir. I ſum up half mankind,
And add two thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That ſpreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,
To ſport their ſeaſon, and be ſeen no more.
The reſt are ſober dreamers, grave and wiſe,
And pregnant with diſcov'ries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known; and call the rant

An hiſtory: deſcribe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note;
And paint his perſon, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They diſentangle from the puzzled ſkein,
In which obſcurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and ſhrewd deſign,
That ran through all his purpoſes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The ſolid earth, and from the ſtrata there
Extract a regiſter, by which we learn,
That he who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moſes, was miſtaken in its age.
Some, more acute, and more induſtrious ſtill,
Contrive creation; travel nature up
To the ſharp peak of her ſublimeſt height,
And tell us whence the ſtars; why ſome are fix'd,
And planetary ſome; what gave them firſt
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great conteſt follows, and much learned duſt
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,
And truth diſclaiming both. And thus they ſpend
The little wick of life's poor ſhallow lamp,
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To diſtant worlds, and trifling in their own.

Is 't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
Should ever teaſe the lungs and blear the ſight
Of oracles like theſe? Great pity too,
That, having wielded th' elements, and built
A thouſand ſyſtems, each in his own way,
They ſhould go out in fume, and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus ſpent? and what are they
But frantic who thus ſpend it? all for ſmoke—
Eternity for bubbles, proves at laſt
A ſenſeleſs bargain. When I ſee ſuch games
Play'd by the creatures of a pow'r who ſwears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a ſharp reck'ning that has liv'd in vain;
And when I weigh this ſeeming wiſdom well,
And prove it in th' infallible reſult
So hollow and ſo falſe—I feel my heart
Diſſolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, moſt of all deceiv'd.
Great crimes alarm the conſcience, but it ſleeps
While thoughtful man is plauſibly amus'd.
Defend me, therefore, common ſenſe, ſay I,
From reveries ſo airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well, ſays one ſage erudite, profound,

Terribly arch'd and aquiline his noſe,
And overbuilt with moſt impending brows,
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleaſes. What's the world to you?—
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,
As ſweet as charity, from human breaſts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exerciſe all functions of a man.
How then ſhould I and any man that lives
Be ſtrangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimſon ſtream meand'ring there,
And catechiſe it well; apply thy glaſs,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own: and, if it be,
What edge of ſubtlety canſt thou ſuppoſe
Keen enough, wiſe and ſkilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confeſs,
In arts like your's. I cannot call the ſwift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themſelves in earth beneath;
I cannot analyſe the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point,
That ſeems half quench'd in the immenſe abyſs:
Such pow'rs I boaſt not—neither can I reſt

A ſilent witneſs of the headlong rage
Or heedleſs folly by which thouſands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred ſouls to mine.

God never meant that man ſhould ſcale the heav'n
By ſtrides of human wiſdom. In his works,
Though wondrous, he commands us in his word
To ſeek *him* rather, where his mercy ſhines.
The mind indeed, enlighten'd from above,
Views him in all; aſcribes to the grand cauſe
The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture taſtes his ſtyle.
But never yet did philoſophic tube,
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of obſervation, and diſcovers, elſe
Not viſible, his family of worlds,
Diſcover him that rules them; ſuch a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
And dark in things divine. Full often, too,
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her author more;
From inſtrumental cauſes proud to draw
Concluſions retrograde, and mad miſtake.
But if his word once teach us, ſhoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiſcern'd but by that holy light,

Then all is plain. Philoſophy, baptiz'd
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all ſhe ſees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *him* his praiſe, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has born ſuch fruit in other days
On all her branches: piety has found
Friends in the friends of ſcience, and true pray'r
Has flow'd from lips wet with Caſtalian dews.
Such was thy wiſdom, Newton, childlike ſage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word ſagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whoſe genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna! And ſuch thine, in whom
Our Britiſh Themis gloried with juſt cauſe,
Immortal Hale! for deep diſcernment prais'd,
And ſound integrity, not more than fam'd
For ſanctity of manners undefil'd.

All fleſh is graſs, and all its glory fades
Like the fair flow'r diſhevell'd in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream:
The man we celebrate muſt find a tomb,
And we that worſhip him ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof againſt the gen'ral curſe
Of vanity, that ſeizes all below.

ranthine flow'r on earth
only laſting treaſure, truth.
.ruth? 'twas Pilate's queſtion, put
ſelf, that deign'd him no reply.
ore? will not God impart his light
iat aſk it?—Freely—'tis his joy,
and his nature, to impart.
: proud, uncandid, inſincere,
ent, inquirer not a ſpark.
hat which brings contempt upon a book,
a who writes it; though the ſtyle be neat,
:thod clear, and argument exact?
aakes a miniſter in holy things
y of many, and the dread of more,
ame a theme for praiſe and for reproach?—
while it gives us worth in God's account,
ciates and undoes us in our own?
pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
learning is too proud to gather up;
hich the poor, and the deſpis'd of all,
and obtain, and often find unſought?
ne—and I will tell thee what is truth.

friendly to the beſt purſuits of man,
dly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
:ſtic life in rural leiſure paſs'd!

Few know thy value, and few taſte thy ſweets;
Though many boaſt thy favours, and affect
To underſtand and chooſe thee for their own.
But fooliſh man forgoes his proper bliſs,
Ev'n as his firſt progenitor, and quits,
Though plac'd in paradiſe, (for earth has ſtill
Some traces of her youthful beauty left)
Subſtantial happineſs for tranſient joy.
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurſe
The growing ſeeds of wiſdom; that ſuggeſt,
By ev'ry pleaſing image they preſent,
Reflections ſuch as meliorate the heart,
Compoſe the paſſions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes ſuch as theſe 'tis his ſupreme delight
To fill with riot, and defile with blood.
Should ſome contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We perſecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the ſportſman over hill and dale,
Fearleſs and rapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fiſh's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feaſt and ſong,
Be quell'd in all our ſummer-months' retreat;
How many ſelf-deluded nymphs and ſwains,
Who dream they have a taſte for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurs'ries of the ſpleen,

And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none elſe, who ſeek
For their own ſake its ſilence and its ſhade.
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Suſceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultur'd and capable of ſober thought,
For all the ſavage din of the ſwift pack,
And clamours of the field?—Deteſted ſport,
That owes its pleaſures to another's pain;
That feeds upon the ſobs and dying ſhrieks
Of harmleſs nature, dumb, but yet endu'd
With eloquence, that agonies inſpire,
Of ſilent tears and heart-diſtending ſighs?
Vain tears, alas, and ſighs, that never find
A correſponding tone in jovial ſouls!
Well—one at leaſt is ſafe. One ſhelter'd hare
Has never heard the ſanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at laſt familiar; ſhe has loſt
Much of her vigilant inſtinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes—thou may'ſt eat thy bread, and lick the hand
That feeds thee; thou may'ſt frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire ſecure

To thy ſtraw couch, and ſlumber unalarm'd;
For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledg'd
All that is human in me to protect
Thine unſuſpecting gratitude and love.
If I ſurvive thee I will dig thy grave;
And, when I place thee in it, ſighing ſay,
I knew at leaſt one hare that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle; and who juſtly, in return,
Eſteems that buſy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
Delightful induſtry enjoy'd at home,
And nature in her cultivated trim
Dreſs'd to his taſte, inviting him abroad—
Can he want occupation who has theſe?
Will he be idle who has much t' enjoy?
Me, therefore, ſtudious of laborious eaſe,
Not ſlothful; happy to deceive the time,
Not waſte it; and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with uſe,
When He ſhall call his debtors to account
From whom are all our bleſſings; buſineſs finds
Ev'n here; while ſedulous I ſeek t' improve,
At leaſt neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,
The mind he gave me; driving it, though ſlack

Too oft, and much impeded in its work
By cauſes not to be divulg'd in vain,
To its juſt point—the ſervice of mankind.
He that attends to his interior ſelf,
That has a heart, and keeps it; has a mind
That hungers, and ſupplies it; and who ſeeks
A ſocial, not a diſſipated life,
Has buſineſs; feels himſelf engag'd t' achieve
No unimportant, though a ſilent, taſk.
A life all turbulence and noiſe may ſeem,
To him that leads it, wiſe, and to be prais'd;
But wiſdom is a pearl with moſt ſucceſs
Sought in ſtill water, and beneath clear ſkies.
He that is ever occupied in ſtorms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up inſtead,
Vainly induſtrious, a diſgraceful prize.

The morning finds the ſelf-ſequeſter'd man
Freſh for his taſk, intend what taſk he may.
Whether inclement ſeaſons recommend
His warm but ſimple home, where he enjoys,
With her who ſhares his pleaſures and his heart,
Sweet converſe, ſipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly ſhe prepares; then to his book,
Well choſen, and not ſullenly perus'd
In ſelfiſh ſilence, but imparted oft

As aught occurs that ſhe may ſmile to hear,
Or turn to nouriſhment, digeſted well.
Or, if the garden with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conſcious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loit'ring lazily, if not o'erſeen,
Or miſapplying his unſkilful ſtrength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himſelf. No works indeed
That aſk robuſt tough ſinews, bred to toil,
Servile employ; but ſuch as may amuſe,
Not tire, demanding rather ſkill than force.
Proud of his well-ſpread walls, he views his trees
That meet (no barren interval between)
With pleaſure more than ev'n their fruits afford,
Which, ſave himſelf who trains them, none can feel:
Theſe, therefore, are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may diſcipline the ſhoots,
None but his ſteel approach them. What is weak,
Diſtemper'd, or has loſt prolific pow'rs,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he ſpare the ſoft
And ſucculent, that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at th' expence of neighb'ring twigs
Leſs oſtentatious, and yet ſtudded thick

gems. The reſt, no portion left
grace his art, or diſappoint
ation, he diſpoſes neat
diſtances, that air and ſun,
reely, may afford their aid,
ate and warm the ſwelling buds.
mer has her riches, autumn hence,
e ev'n winter fills his wither'd hand
ſhing fruits, and plenty, not his own *.
ompenſe of labour well beſtow'd,
ſe precaution; which a clime ſo rude
needful ſtill, whoſe ſpring is but the child
ariſh winter, in her froward moods
vering much the temper of her ſire.
oft, as if in her the ſtream of mild
ernal nature had revers'd its courſe,
brings her infants forth with many ſmiles;
t, once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.
; therefore, timely warn'd, himſelf ſupplies
er want of care, ſcreening and keeping warm
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blaſt may ſweep
His garlands from the boughs Again, as oft
ſun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,

The fence withdrawn, he gives them ev'ry beam,
And ſpreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raiſe the prickly and green-coated gourd,
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, elſe baſe and diſeſteem'd—
Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
That toiling ages have but juſt matur'd,
And at this moment unaſſay'd in ſong.
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long ſince,
Their eulogy; thoſe ſang the Mantuan bard,
And theſe the Grecian, in ennobling ſtrains;
And in thy numbers, Phillips, ſhines for aye
The ſolitary ſhilling. Pardon then,
Ye ſage diſpenſers of poetic fame,
Th' ambition of one, meaner far, whoſe pow'rs,
Preſuming an attempt not leſs ſublime,
Pant for the praiſe of dreſſing to the taſte
Of critic appetite, no ſordid fare,
A cucumber, while coſtly yet and ſcarce.

The ſtable yields a ſtercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting ſalts,
And potent to reſiſt the freezing blaſt:
For, ere the beech and elm have caſt their leaf
Deciduous, *when now* November dark

Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Expos'd to his cold breath, the taſk begins.
Warily, therefore, and with prudent heed,
He ſeeks a favour'd ſpot; that where he builds
Th' agglomerated pile his frame may front
The ſun's meridian diſk, and at the back
Enjoy cloſe ſhelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. Firſt he bids ſpread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
Th' aſcending damps; then leiſurely impoſe,
And lightly, ſhaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the ſaturated ſtraw.
What longeſt binds the cloſeſt forms ſecure
The ſhapely ſide, that as it riſes takes,
By juſt degrees, an overhanging breadth,
Shelt'ring the baſe with its projected eaves;
Th' uplifted frame, compact at ev'ry joint,
And overlaid with clear tranſlucent glaſs,
He ſettles next upon the ſloping mount,
Whoſe ſharp declivity ſhoots off ſecure
From the daſh'd pane the deluge as it falls.
He ſhuts it cloſe, and the firſt labour ends.
Thrice muſt the voluble and reſtleſs earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
Slow gathering in the midſt, through the ſquare
Diffus'd, attain the ſurface: when, behold!

A peſtilent and moſt corroſive ſtream,
Like a groſs fog Bœotian, riſing faſt,
And faſt condens'd upon the dewy faſh,
Aſks egreſs; which obtain'd, the overcharg'd
And drench'd conſervatory breathes abroad,
In volumes wheeling ſlow, the vapour dank;
And, purified, rejoices to have loſt
Its foul inhabitant. But to aſſuage
Th' impatient fervour which at firſt conceives
Within its reeking boſom, threat'ning death
To his young hopes, requires diſcreet delay.
Experience, ſlow preceptreſs, teaching oft
The way to glory by miſcarriage foul,
Muſt prompt him, and admoniſh how to catch
Th' auſpicious moment, when the temper'd heat,
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fomentation, and invite the ſeed.
The ſeed, ſelected wiſely, plump, and ſmooth,
And gloſſy, he commits to pots of ſize
Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepar'd
And fruitful ſoil, that has been treaſur'd long,
And drank no moiſture from the dripping clouds:
Theſe on the warm and genial earth, that hides
The ſmoking manure and o'erſpreads it all,
He places lightly, and, as time ſubdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the ſoft medium, till they ſtand immers'd.

Then riſe the tender germs, upſtarting quick,
And ſpreading wide their ſpongy lobes; at firſt
Pale, wan, and livid; but aſſuming ſoon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid gree
Two leaves produc'd, two rough indented leaves
Cautious he pinches from the ſecond ſtalk
A pimple, that portends a future ſprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence ſtraight ſuc
The branches, ſturdy to his utmoſt wiſh;
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargment now,
And tranſplantation in an ampler ſpace.
Indulg'd in what they wiſh, they ſoon ſupply
Large foliage, overſhadowing golden flow'rs,
Blown on the ſummit of th' apparent fruit.
Theſe have their ſexes! and, when ſummer ſhir
The bee tranſports the fertilizing meal
From flow'r to flow'r, and e'en the breathing a
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed uſe.
Not ſo when winter ſcowls. Aſſiſtant art
Then acts in nature's office, brings to paſs
The glad eſpouſals, and enſures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (ſince luxury muſt
His dainties, and the world's more num'ro

Lives by contriving delicates for you)
Grudge not the coſt. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the ſkill,
That day and night are exercis'd, and hang
Upon the tickliſh balance of ſuſpenſe,
That ye may garniſh your profuſe regales
With ſummer fruits brought forth by wintry ſuns.
Ten thouſand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The proceſs. Heat and cold, and wind, and ſteam,
Moiſture and drought, mice, worms, and ſwarming flies,
Minute as duſt, and numberleſs, oft work
Dire diſappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell th' expedients and the ſhifts
Which he that fights a ſeaſon ſo ſevere
Deviſes, while he guards his tender truſt;
And oft, at laſt, in vain. The learn'd and wiſe
Sarcaſtic would exclaim, and judge the ſong
Cold as its theme, and, like its theme, the fruit
Of too much labour, worthleſs when produc'd.

Who loves a garden loves a green-houſe too.
Unconſcious of a leſs propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and ſnug,
While the winds whiſtle and the ſnows deſcend.
The ſpiry myrtle with unwith'ring leaf

Shines there, and flouriſhes. The golden boaſt
Of Portugal and weſtern India there,
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,
Peep through their poliſh'd foliage at the ſtorm,
And ſeem to ſmile at what they need not fear.
Th' amomum there with intermingling flow'rs
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boaſts
Her crimſon honours, and the ſpangled beau,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of ev'ry leaf, that can endure
The winter's frown, if ſcreen'd from his ſhrewd bite,
Live there, and proſper. Thoſe Auſonia claims,
Levantine regions theſe; th' Azores ſend
Their jeſſamine, her jeſſamine remote
Caffraia: foreigners from many lands,
They form one ſocial ſhade, as if conven'd
By magic ſummons of th' Orphean lyre.
Yet juſt arrangement, rarely brought to paſs
But by a maſter's hand, diſpoſing well
The gay diverſities of leaf and flow'r,
Muſt lend it's aid t' illuſtrate all their charms,
And dreſs the regular yet various ſcene.
Plant behind plant aſpiring, in the van
The dwarfiſh, in the rear retir'd, but ſtill
Sublime above the reſt, the ſtatelier ſtand.
So once were rang'd the ſons of ancient Rome,
A noble ſhow! while Roſcius trod the ſtage;

And ſo, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,
The ſons of Albion; fearing each to loſe
Some note of Nature's muſic from his lips,
And covetous of Shakeſpeare's beauty, ſeen
In ev'ry flaſh of his far-beaming eye.
Nor taſte alone and well-contriv'd diſplay
Suffice to give the marſhall'd ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unſung, and many cares are yet behind,
And more laborious; cares on which depend
Their vigour, injur'd ſoon, not ſoon reſtor'd.
The ſoil muſt be renew'd, which, often waſh'd,
Loſes its treaſure of ſalubrious ſalts,
And diſappoints the roots; the ſlender roots
Cloſe interwoven, where they meet the vaſe,
Muſt ſmooth be ſhorn away; the ſapleſs branch
Muſt fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
Muſt be detach'd, and where it ſtrews the floor
Swept with a woman's neatneſs, breeding elſe
Contagion, and diſſeminating death.
Diſcharge but theſe kind offices, (and who
Would ſpare, that loves them, offices like theſe?)
All they reward the toil. The ſight is pleas'd,
The ſcent regal'd, each odorif'rous leaf,
Each op'ning bloſſom, freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its ſweets.

So manifold, all pleaſing in their kind,
All healthful, are th' employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round; ſtill ending, and beginning ſt
Nor are theſe all. To deck the ſhapely kn
That, ſoftly ſwell'd and gaily dreſs'd, appe
A flow'ry iſland, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, muſt be deem'd a labour due
To no mean hand, and aſks the touch of t
Here alſo grateful mixture of well-match'd
And ſorted hues (each giving each relief,
And by contraſted beauty ſhining more)
Is needful. Strength may wield the pond'r
May turn the clod, and wheel the compoſt
But elegance, chief grace the garden ſhows,
And moſt attractive, is the fair reſult
Of thought, the creature of a poliſh'd mind.
Without it all is gothic as the ſcene
To which th' inſipid citizen reſorts
Near yonder heath; where induſtry miſpent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-choſen taſk,
Has made a heav'n on earth; with ſuns and
Of cloſe-ramm'd ſtones has charg'd th' encu
And fairly laid the zodiac in the duſt.
He, therefore, who would ſee his flow'rs diſ
Sightly and in juſt order, ere he gives

The beds the truſted treaſure of their ſeeds,
Forecaſts the future whole; that, when the ſcene
Shall break into its preconceiv'd diſplay,
Each for itſelf, and all as with one voice
Conſpiring, may atteſt his bright deſign.
Nor even then, diſmiſſing as perform'd
His pleaſant work, may he ſuppoſe it done.
Few ſelf-ſupported flow'rs endure the wind
Uninjur'd, but expect th' upholding aid
Of the ſmooth-ſhaven prop, and neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For int'reſt ſake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the ſoil that feeds them, far diffus'd
And lowly creeping, modeſt and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving moſt where little ſeen:
Some, more aſpiring, catch the neighbour ſhrub
With claſping tendrils, and inveſt his branch,
Elſe unadorn'd, with many a gay feſtoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompenſing well
The ſtrength they borrow with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank ſociety of weeds,
Noiſome, and ever greedy to exhauſt
Th' impov'riſh'd earth; an overbearing race,
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
Diſturb good order, and degrade true worth.

Oh, bleſt ſecluſion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man reſtore
Loſt innocence, or cancel follies paſt;
But it has peace, and much ſecures the mind
From all aſſaults of evil; proving ſtill
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with eaſe
By vicious cuſtom, raging uncontroll'd
Abroad, and deſolating public life.
When fierce temptation, ſeconded within
By traitor appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breaſt,
To combat may be glorious, and ſucceſs
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is ſafe.
Had I the choice of ſublunary good,
What could I wiſh, that I poſſeſs not here?
Health, leiſure, means t' improve it, friendſhip, peace
No looſe or wanton, though a wand'ring, muſe,
And conſtant occupation without care.
Thus bleſt, I draw a picture of that bliſs;
Hopeleſs, indeed, that diſſipated minds,
And profligate abuſers of a world
Created fair ſo much in vain for them,
Should ſeek the guiltleſs joys that I deſcribe,
Allur'd by my report: but ſure no leſs,

, ſelf-condemn'd, they muſt neglect the prize,
what they will not taſte muſt yet approve.
t we admire we praiſe; and, when we praiſe,
ince it into notice, that, its worth
nowledg'd, others may admire it too.
refore recommend, though at the riſk
opular diſguſt, yet boldly ſtill,
cauſe of piety and ſacred truth,
virtue, and thoſe ſcenes which God ordain'd
ild beſt ſecure them and promote them moſt;
es that I love, and with regret perceive
aken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
is the nymph, though lib'ral of her ſmiles,
chaſte, though unconfin'd, whom I extol.
is the prince in Shuſhan, when he call'd,
glorious of her charms, his Vaſhti forth
ace the full pavilion. His deſign
at to boaſt his own peculiar good,
all might view with envy, none partake.
rmer is not mine alone; my ſweets,
that ſweetens all my bitters too,
enchanting Nature, in whoſe form
aments divine I trace a hand
not, and find raptures ſtill renew'd,
all men—univerſal prize.

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Strange that ſo fair a creature ſhould yet want
Admirers, and be deſtin'd to divide
With meaner objects ev'n the few ſhe finds!
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flow'rs,
She loſes all her influence. Cities then
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines,
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholeſome airs, though unperfum'd
By roſes; and clear ſuns, though ſcarcely felt;
And groves, if unharmonious, yet ſecure
From clamour, and whoſe very ſilence charms;
To be preferr'd to ſmoke, to the eclipſe
That Metropolitan volcanos make,
Whoſe Stygian throats breathe darkneſs all day long;
And to the ſtir of commerce, driving ſlow,
And thund'ring loud, with his ten thouſand wheels?
They would be, were not madneſs in the head,
And folly in the heart; were England now
What England was; plain, hoſpitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of thoſe better days,
And all their honeſt pleaſures. Manſions once
Knew their own maſters; and laborious hinds,
Who had ſurviv'd the father, ſerv'd the ſon.
Now the legitimate and rightful lord
a tranſient gueſt, newly arriv'd,

And ſoon to be ſupplanted. He that ſaw
His patrimonial timber caſt its leaf,
Sells the laſt ſcantling, and transfers the price
To ſome ſhrewd ſharper, ere it buds again.
Eſtates are landſcapes, gaz'd upon a while,
Then advertis'd, and auctioneer'd away.
The country ſtarves, and they that feed th' o'ercharg'd
And ſurfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a juſt judgment ſtrip and ſtarve themſelves.
The wings that waft our riches out of ſight
Grow on the gameſter's elbows; and th' alert
And nimble motion of thoſe reſtleſs joints,
That never tire, ſoon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes!
Th' omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!
Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode
Of our forefathers—a grave whiſker'd race,
But taſteleſs. Springs a palace in its ſtead,
But in a diſtant ſpot; where, more expos'd,
It may enjoy th' advantage of the north,
And aguiſh eaſt, till time ſhall have transform'd
Thoſe naked acres to a ſhelt'ring grove.
He ſpeaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;
Woods vaniſh, hills ſubſide, and vallies riſe;
And ſtreams, as if created for his uſe,

k of his directing wand,
ight, now rapid and now ſlow,
ng ſoft, now roaring in caſcades—
is! Th' enraptur'd owner ſmiles.
and yet, finiſh'd as it ſeems,
grace, the loveliеſt it could ſhow,
isly th' enormous coſt.
ic left poor item of his wealth,
parts, and leaves th' accompliſh'd plan
touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
nd many a night purſu'd in dreams,
meets his hopes, and proves the heav'n
for a wealthier to enjoy!
rhaps the glorious hour is come,
ng no ſtake left, no pledge t' endear
, or that gives her ſacred cauſe
operation on his love,
h moſt intenſe and flagrant zeal
country. Miniſterial grace
ut money from the public cheſt;
mine be ſhut, ſome private purſe
need with an uſurious loan,
ded duly when his vote,
g'd, ſhall have earn'd its worthy price.
t, compar'd with arts like theſe,
cock'd piſtol, and the whiſtling ball

Sent through
One drop of
Can dig, beg,
So he may wr
At his laſt gaſ
Fill up his dir
From pools an
Loathed and ſick

Ambition
By endleſs
Of pleaſ
As duly
The wo
London
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ſent through the trav'ller's temples! He that finds
One drop of heav'n's ſweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and periſh, well content,
So he may wrap himſelf in honeſt rags
At his laſt gaſp; but could not for a world
Fiſh up his dirty and dependent bread
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid and ſick'ning at his own ſucceſs.

Ambition, av'rice, penury incurr'd
By endleſs riot, vanity, the luſt
Of pleaſure and variety, diſpatch,
As duly as the ſwallows diſappear,
The world of wand'ring knights and ſquires to town.
London ingulphs them all! The ſhark is there,
And the ſhark's prey; the ſpendthrift and the leech
That ſucks him. There the ſycophant, and he
Who, with bare-headed and obſequious bows,
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
The levee ſwarms, as if, in golden pomp,
Were character'd on ev'ry ſtateman's door,
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."
Theſe are the charms that ſully and eclipſe
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe

That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wiſh to ſhine, the thirſt to be amus'd,
That at the ſound of winter's hoary wing
Unpeople all our counties of ſuch herds
Of flutt'ring, loit'ring, cringing, begging, looſe
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vaſt
And boundleſs as it is, a crowded coop.

Oh thou, reſort and mart of all the earth,
Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And ſpotted with all crimes; in whom I ſee
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
That pleaſeſt and yet ſhock'ſt me, I can laugh
And I can weep, can hope, and can deſpond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have ſav'd a city once,
And thou haſt many righteous.—Well for thee—
That ſalt preſerves thee; more corrupted elſe,
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour
Than Sodom in her day had pow'r to be,
For whom God heard his Ab'ram plead in vain.

THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

The poſt comes in.—The news-paper is read.—The world contemplated at a diſtance.—Addreſs to Winter.—The rural amuſements of a winter's evening compared with the faſhionable ones.—Addreſs to evening.—A brown ſtudy.—Fall of ſnow in the evening.—The waggoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houſes. The multitude of them cenſured.—The farmer's daughter: what ſhe was—what ſhe is.—The ſimplicity of country manners almoſt loſt.—Cauſes of the change.—Deſertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magiſtrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguiſhed.

THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn;
And, having dropp'd th' expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief

Perhaps to thouſands, and of joy to ſome;
To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy.
Houſes in aſhes, and the fall of ſtocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epiſtles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Faſt as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charg'd with am'rous ſighs of abſent ſwains,
Or nymphs reſponſive, equally affect
His horſe and him, unconſcious of them all.
But oh th' important budget! uſher'd in
With ſuch heart-ſhaking muſic, who can ſay
What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd?
Or do they ſtill, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does ſhe wear her plum'd
And jewell'd turban with a ſmile of peace,
Or do we grind her ſtill? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic and the wiſdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to ſet the impriſon'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utt'rance once again.

Now ſtir the fire, and cloſe the ſhutters faſt,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the ſofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hiſſing urn

Throws up a ſteamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.
Not ſuch his ev'ning, who with ſhining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, ſqueez'd
And bor'd with elbow-points through both his ſides,
Out-ſcolds the ranting actor on the ſtage:
Nor his, who patient ſtands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, burſting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and ſmiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not ev'n critics criticiſe; that holds
Inquiſitive attention, while I read,
Faſt bound in chains of ſilence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themſelves, yet fear to break;
What is it, but a map of buſy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vaſt concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition. On the ſummit ſee
The ſeals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he graſps them! At his heels,
Cloſe at his heels, a demagogue aſcends,
And with a dext'rous jerk ſoon twiſts him down,
And wins them, but to loſe them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in ſoft

Meanders lubricate the courſe they take;
The modeſt ſpeaker is aſham'd and griev'd
T' engroſs a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet baſhfulneſs! it claims at leaſt this praiſe;
The dearth of information and good ſenſe
That it foretells us always comes to paſs.
Cat'racts of declamation thunder here;
There foreſts of no meaning ſpread the page,
In which all comprehenſion wanders, loſt;
While fields of pleaſantry amuſe us there
With merry deſcants on a nation's woes.
The reſt appears a wilderneſs of ſtrange
But gay confuſion; roſes for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothleſs, ringlets for the bald,
Heav'n, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their ſweets,
Nectareous eſſences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feaſts, and fav'rite airs,
Æthereal journies, ſubmarine exploits,
And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.

'Tis pleaſant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at ſuch a world; to ſee the ſtir

great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
ır the roar ſhe ſends through all her gates
afe diſtance, where the dying ſound
ı ſoft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.
ſitting, and ſurveying thus at eaſe
lobe and its concerns, I ſeem advanc'd
ne ſecure and more than mortal height,
lib'rates and exempts me from them all.
ıs ſubmitted to my view, turns round
all its generations; I behold
umult, and am ſtill The ſound of war
ſt its terrors ere it reaches me;
:s, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
.v'rice that make man a wolf to man;
:he faint echo of thoſe brazen throats
ich he ſpeaks the language of his heart,
gh, but never tremble at the ſound.
ıvels and expatiates, as the bee
flow'r to flow'r, ſo he from land to land;
ıanners, cuſtoms, policy, of all
ntribution to the ſtore he gleans;
ks intelligence in ev'ry clime,
preads the honey of his deep reſearch
return—a rich repaſt for me.
vels, and I too. I tread his deck,
d his topmaſt, through his peering eyes

Diſcover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and ſhare in his eſcapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is ſtill at home.

Oh Winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy ſcatter'd hair with ſleet like aſhes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring'd with a beard made white with other ſnows
Than thoſe of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafleſs branch thy ſceptre, and thy throne
A ſliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urg'd by ſtorms along its ſlipp'ry way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou ſeem'ſt,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'ſt the ſun
A pris'ner in the yet undawning eaſt,
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his ſtay,
Down to the roſy weſt; but kindly ſtill
Compenſating his loſs with added hours
Of ſocial converſe and inſtructive eaſe,
And gath'ring, at ſhort notice, in one group
The family diſpers'd, and fixing thought,
Not leſs diſpers'd by day-light and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fire-ſide enjoyments, home-born happineſs,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof

Of undiſturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted ev'ning, know.
No ratt'ling wheels ſtop ſhort before theſe gates;
No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of ſounding an alarm aſſaults theſe doors
Till the ſtreet rings; no ſtationary ſteeds
Cough their own knell, while heedleſs of the ſound,
The ſilent circle fan themſelves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its buſy taſk,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
Wrought patiently into the ſnowy lawn,
Unfolds its boſom; buds, and leaves, and ſprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully diſpos'd,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flow'rs that blow
With moſt ſucceſs when all beſides decay.
The poet's or hiſtorian's page, by one
Made vocal for th' amuſement of the reſt;
The ſprightly lyre, whoſe treaſure of ſweet ſounds
The touch from many a trembling chord ſhakes out;
And the clear voice ſymphonious, yet diſtinct,
And in the charming ſtrife triumphant ſtill;
Beguile the night, and ſet a keener edge
On female induſtry: the threaded ſteel
Flies ſwiftly, and, unfelt, the taſk proceeds.
The volume cloſ'd, the cuſtomary rites

Of the laſt meal commence. A Roman meal;
Such as the miſtreſs of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domeſtic ſhade,
Enjoy'd—ſpare feaſt!—a radiſh and an egg!
Diſcourſe enſues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor ſuch as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proſcribes the ſound of mirth:
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name, or deem his praiſe
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with mem'ry's pointing wand,
That calls the paſt to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'ſcap'd, the broken ſnare,
The diſappointed foe, deliv'rance found
Unlook'd for, life preſerv'd and peace reſtor'd—
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
Oh ev'nings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
The Sabine bard. Oh ev'nings, I reply,
More to be priz'd and coveted than your's,
As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and thoſe we love, enjoy.

r hideous in a garb like this?
the tragic fur, the ſmoke of lamps,
up breath of an unſav'ry throng,
lim into feeling; or the ſmart
liſh dialogue, that flippant wits
dy, to prompt him with a ſmile?
complacent actor, when he views
a ſide-long glance at a full houſe)
of faces, from the floor to th' roof,
maſter-ſpring controul'd them all)
to an univerſal grin,
count'nance there that ſpeaks of joy
fin'd or ſo ſincere as our's.
e ſuperfl'ous here, with all the tricks
leſs has ever yet contriv'd
e void of an unfurniſh'd brain,
e dullneſs, and give time a ſhove.
he paſſes us, has a dove's wing,
and ſwift, and of a ſilken ſound;
orld's time is time in maſquerade!
ſhould I paint him, has his pinions fledg'd
ley plumes; and, where the peacock ſhows
eyes, is tinctur'd black and red
s quadrangular of di'mond form,
n'd hearts, clubs typical of ſtrife,
s, the emblem of untimely graves.

is the underſtanding takes repoſe
ent vacuity of thought,
ps and is refreſh'd. Meanwhile the face
s the mood lethargic with a maſk
deliberation, as the man
ſk'd to his full ſtrength, abſorb'd and loſt.
't, reclin'd at eaſe, I loſe an hour
ing, till at length the freezing blaſt,
eeps the bolted ſhutter, ſummons home
ollected pow'rs; and ſnapping ſhort
ſſy threads, with which the fancy weaves
ttle toys, reſtores me to myſelf.
lm is my receſs; and how the froſt,
abroad, and the rough wind, endear
nce and the warmth enjoy'd within!
ie woods and fields, at cloſe of day,
gated ſhow; the meadows green,
i faded; and the lands, where lately wav'd
lden harveſt, of a mellow brown,
'd ſo lately by the forceful ſhare.'
ar off the weedy fallows ſmile
erdure not unprofitable, graz'd
ks, faſt feeding, and ſelecting each
'rite herb; while all the leafleſs groves,
cirt th' horizon, wore a ſable hue,
notic'd in the kindred duſk of eve.

To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though ſilently perform'd,
And ſlowly, and by moſt unfelt, the face
Of univerſal nature undergoes.
Faſt falls a fleecy ſhow'r: the downy flakes,
Deſcending, and with never-ceaſing lapſe,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Aſſimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thick'ning mantle; and the green
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blaſt,
Eſcapes unhurt beneath ſo warm a veil.

In ſuch a world; ſo thorny, and where none
Finds happineſs unblighted; or, if found,
Without ſome thiſtly ſorrow at its ſide;
It ſeems the part of wiſdom, and no ſin
Againſt the law of love, to meaſure lots
With leſs diſtinguiſh'd than ourſelves; that thus
We may with patience bear our mod'rate ills,
And ſympathiſe with others, ſuff'ring more.
Ill fares the trav'ller now, and he that ſtalks
In pond'rous boots beſide his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded ſore
By congregated loads adhering cloſe
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its ſluggiſh pace,
Noiſeleſs, appears a moving hill of ſnow.

The toiling steeds expand the noſtril wide,
While ev'ry breath, by reſpiration ſtrong,
Forc'd downward, is conſolidated ſoon
Upon their jutting cheſts. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempeſtuous night,
With half-ſhut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Preſented bare againſt the ſtorm, plods on.
One hand ſecures his hat, ſave when with both
He brandiſhes his pliant length of whip,
Reſounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy; and, in my account, denied
That ſenſibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!
Thy frame, robuſt and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vig'rous pulſe; and the unhealthful eaſt,
That breathes the ſpleen, and ſearches ev'ry bone
Of the infirm, is wholeſome air to thee.
Thy days roll on, exempt from houſehold care;
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beaſts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpleſs charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'ſt,
Yet ſhow that thou haſt mercy! which the great,

With needleſs hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would ſeem, not always ſhow.

Poor, yet induſtrious, modeſt, quiet, neat;
Such claim compaſſion in a night like this,
And have a friend in ev'ry feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it laſts, by labour, all day long
They brave the ſeaſon, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but ſparely, time to cool.
The frugal houſewife trembles when ſhe lights
Her ſcanty ſtock of bruſh-wood, blazing clear,
But dying ſoon, like all terreſtrial joys.
The few ſmall embers left ſhe nurſes well;
And, while her infant race, with outſpread hands
And crowded knees, fit cow'ring o'er the ſparks,
Retires, content to quake, ſo they be warm'd.
The man feels leaſt, as more inur'd than ſhe
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briſkly mov'd by his ſeverer toil;
Yet he, too, finds his own diſtreſs in their's.
The taper ſoon extinguiſh'd, which I ſaw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Juſt when the day declin'd, and the brown loaf
Lodg'd on the ſhelf, half-eaten without ſauce
Of ſav'ry cheeſe, or butter, coſtlier ſtill;

Sleep ſeems their only refuge: for, alas,
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,
And ſweet colloquial pleaſures are but few!
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious parſimony takes but juſt
Saves the ſmall inventory, bed, and ſtool,
Skillet, and old carv'd cheſt, from public ſale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands; but other boaſt have none
To ſooth their honeſt pride, that ſcorns to beg,
Nor comfort elſe, but in their mutual love.
I praiſe you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; chooſing rather far
A dry but independent cruſt, hard earn'd,
And eaten with a ſigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and inſolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of diſtribution; lib'ral of their aid
To clam'rous importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to ſuppliants, who would bluſh
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarſe,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:
Theſe aſk with painful ſhyneſs, and, refus'd
Becauſe deſerving, ſilently retire!
But be ye of good courage! Time itſelf
Shall much befriend you. Time ſhall give increaſe,

And all your num'rous progeny, well-train'd,
But helpleſs, in few years ſhall find their hands,
And labour too. Meanwhile ye ſhall not want
What, conſcious of your virtues, we can ſpare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourſelves may ſend.
I mean the man, who, when the diſtant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty, with moſt who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is ſelf-inflicted woe;
Th' effect of lazineſs or ſottiſh waſte.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much ſolicitous how beſt
He may compenſate for a day of ſloth
By works of darkneſs and nocturnal wrong.
Woe to the gard'ner's pale, the farmer's hedge,
Plaſh'd neatly, and ſecur'd with driven ſtakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by ſtrength,
Reſiſtleſs in ſo bad a cauſe, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the ſpoil—
An aſs's burden—and, when laden moſt
And heavieſt, light of foot, ſteals faſt away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-ſtack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unapproach'd the door, however well ſecur'd,

s Chanticleer amidſt his haram ſleeps
ſuſpecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,
res the princely bird, with all his wives,
s voracious bag, ſtruggling in vain,
oadly wond'ring at the ſudden change.—
is to feed his own! 'Twere ſome excuſe
ty of their ſuff'rings warp aſide
inciple, and tempt him into ſin
eir ſupport, ſo deſtitute.—But they
ſted pine at home; themſelves, as more
'd than others, with leſs ſcruple made
ſtims, robb'd of their defenceleſs all.
is all he does. 'Tis quenchleſs thirſt
inous ebriety that prompts
'ry action, and imbrutes the man.
r a law to nooſe the villain's neck
ſtarves his own; who perſecutes the blood
ve them in his children's veins, and hates
rongs the woman he has ſworn to love!

s where we may, through city or through town,
e, or hamlet, of this merry land,
gh lean and beggar'd, ev'ry twentieth pace
ſts th' unguarded noſe to ſuch a whiff
le debauch, forth-iſſuing from the ſtyes
law has licens'd, as makes temp'rance reel.

THE TASK.

re fit, involv'd and loft in curling clouds
Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
ie lackey, and the groom; the craftſman there
akes a Lethean leave of all his toils;
ſmith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the ſhears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk! The fiddle ſcreams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd
Its waſted tones and harmony unheard:
Fierce the diſpute, whate'er the theme; while ſhe,
Fell Diſcord, arbitreſs of ſuch debate,
Perch'd on the ſign-poſt, holds with even hand
Her undeciſive ſcales. In this ſhe lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride;
And ſmiles, delighted with th' eternal poiſe.
Dire is the frequent curſe, and its twin ſound
The cheek-diſtending oath, not to be prais'd
As ornamental, muſical, polite,
Like thoſe which modern ſenators employ,
Whoſe oath is rhet'ric, and who ſwear for fame!
Behold the ſchools in which plebeian minds,
Once ſimple, are initiated in arts,
Which ſome may practiſe with politer grace,
But none with readier ſkill!—'tis here they learn
The road that leads, from competence and peac
To indigence and rapine; till at laſt
Society, grown weary of the load,

Shakes her incumber'd lap, and caſts them out.
But cenſure profits little: vain th' attempt
To advertiſe in verſe a public peſt,
That, like the filth with which the peaſant feeds
His hungry acres, ſtinks, and is of uſe.
Th' exciſe is fatten'd with the rich reſult
Of all this riot; and ten thouſand caſks,
For ever dribbling out their baſe contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the ſtate,
Bleed gold for miniſters to ſpout away.
Drink, and be mad, then; 'tis your country bids!
Gloriouſly drunk, obey th' important call!
Her cauſe demands th' aſſiſtance of your throats;—
Ye all can ſwallow, and ſhe aſks no more.

Would I had fall'n upon thoſe happier days
That poets celebrate; thoſe golden times,
And thoſe Arcadian ſcenes, that Maro ſings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic proſe.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and ſwains had hearts
That felt their virtues: innocence, it ſeems,
From courts diſmiſs'd, found ſhelter in the groves;
The footſteps of ſimplicity, impreſs'd
Upon the yielding herbage, (ſo they ſing)
Then were not all effac'd: then ſpeech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found;

Obſerv'd as prodigies, and ſoon reclaim'd.
Vain wiſh! thoſe days were never: airy dreams
Sat for the picture: and the poet's hand,
Imparting ſubſtance to an empty ſhade,
Impos'd a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it:—I ſtill muſt envy them an age
That favour'd ſuch a dream; in days like theſe
Impoſſible, when virtue is ſo ſcarce,
That to ſuppoſe a ſcene where ſhe preſides,
Is tramontane, and ſtumbles all belief.
No: we are poliſh'd now! the rural laſs,
Whom once her virgin modeſty and grace,
Her artleſs manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that ſhe was hardly leſs
Than the fair ſhepherdeſs of old romance,
Is ſeen no more. The character is loſt!
Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft,
And ribbands ſtreaming gay, ſuperbly rais'd,
And magnified beyond all human ſize,
Indebted to ſome ſmart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the treſſes it ſuſtains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tott'ring form
Ill propp'd upon French heels; ſhe might be deem'd
(But that the baſket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work, or ſale of eggs.

Expect her ſoon with foot-boy at her heels,
No longer bluſhing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care!

The town has ting'd the country; and the ſtain
Appears a ſpot upon a veſtal's robe,
The worſe for what it ſoils. The faſhion runs
Down into ſcenes ſtill rural; but, alas,
Scenes rarely grac'd with rural manners now!
Time was when, in the paſtoral retreat,
Th' unguarded door was ſafe; men did not watch
T' invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then ſleep was undiſturb'd by fear, unſcar'd
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unſuſpicious nights,
And ſlumbers unalarm'd! Now, ere you ſleep,
See that your poliſh'd arms be prim'd with care,
And drop the night-bolt;—ruffians are abroad;
And the firſt larum of the cock's ſhrill throat
May prove a trumpet, ſummoning your ear
To horrid ſounds of hoſtile feet within.
Ev'n daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathleſs waſtes and woods, unconſcious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,

Or harmleſs ocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cauſe
Invet'rate, hopeleſs of a cure, conſpires.
The courſe of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worſe, is fatal, never fails.
Increaſe of pow'r begets increaſe of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury exceſs;
Exceſs, the ſcrofulous and itchy plague
That ſeizes firſt the opulent, deſcends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated ſcale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The licenſe of the loweſt in degree,
Deſert their office; and themſelves, intent
On pleaſure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawleſs hands
Reſign the ſcenes their preſence might protect.
Authority herſelf not ſeldom ſleeps,
Though reſident, and witneſs of the wrong.
The plump convivial parſon often bears
The magiſterial ſword in vain, and lays
His rev'rence and his worſhip both to reſt
On the ſame cuſhion of habitual ſloth.
Perhaps timidity reſtrains his arm;
When he ſhould ſtrike he trembles, and ſets free,

Himſelf enſlav'd by terror of the band,
Th' audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profeſſion ghoſtly pure,
He too may have his vice, and ſometimes prove
Leſs dainty than becomes his grave outſide
In lucrative concerns. Exámine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean—
But here and there an ugly ſmutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touch'd
Corruption! Whoſo ſeeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fiſh,
Wild fowl or ven'ſon; and his errand ſpeeds.

But faſter far, and more than all the reſt,
A noble cauſe, which none who bears a ſpark
Of public virtue ever wiſh'd remov'd,
Works the deplor'd and miſchievous effect.
'Tis univerſal ſoldierſhip has ſtabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner claſs.
Arms, through the vanity and brainleſs rage
Of thoſe that bear them, in whatever cauſe,
Seem moſt at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with ſerious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Bleſt with an infant's ignorance of all

But his own ſimple pleaſures; now and then
A wreſtling match, a foot-race, or a fair;
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepiſh he doffs his hat, and, mumbling, ſwears
A bible-oath to be whate'er they pleaſe,
To do he knows not what! The taſk perform'd,
That inſtant he becomes the ſerjeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jeſt.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round ſhoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curſe. By ſlow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and form'd of ſtubborn ſtuff,
He yet by ſlow degrees puts off himſelf,
Grows conſcious of a change, and likes it well:
He ſtands erect; his ſlouch becomes a walk;
He ſteps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement; is as ſmart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat, or his plum'd helmet, with a grace;
And, his three years of heroſhip expir'd,
Returns indignant to the ſlighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;
And ſighs for the ſmart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—

But with his clumſy port the wretch has loſt
His ignorance and harmleſs manners too!
To ſwear, to game, to drink; to ſhow at home,
By lewdneſs, idleneſs, and ſabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad;
T' aſtoniſh and to grieve his gazing friends;
To break ſome maiden's and his mother's heart;
To be a peſt where he was uſeful once;
Are his ſole aim, and all his glory, now!

Man in ſociety is like a flow'r
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper uſe.
But man, aſſociated and leagu'd with man
By regal warrant, or ſelf-join'd by bond
For int'reſt-ſake, or ſwarming into clans
Beneath one head for purpoſes of war,
Like flow'rs ſelected from the reſt, and bound
And bundled cloſe to fill ſome crowded vaſe,
Fades rapidly, and, by compreſſion marr'd,
Contracts defilement not to be endur'd.
Hence charter'd boroughs are ſuch public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combin'd,

Become a loathſome body, only fit
For diſſolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of ſin
Againſt the charities of domeſtic life,
Incorporated, ſeem at once to loſe
Their nature; and, diſclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the ſword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial juſtice red.
Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
Miſdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majeſty of thund'ring pomp,
Enchanting muſic and immortal wreaths,
Is but a ſchool where thoughtleſſneſs is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for ev'ry vice.

But, ſlighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which ſtill I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me ſtill.
I never fram'd a wiſh, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliſs,
But there I laid the ſcene. There early ſtray'd

My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural; rural, too,
The firſt-born efforts of my youthful muſe,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was miſtreſs of their pow'rs.
No bard could pleaſe me but whoſe lyre was tun'd
To Nature's praiſes. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, aſſembling, as he ſang,
The ruſtic throng beneath his fav'rite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taſte, his Paradiſe ſurpaſs'd
The ſtruggling efforts of my boyiſh tongue
To ſpeak its excellence. I danc'd for joy.
I marvel'd much that, at ſo ripe an age
As twice ſev'n years, his beauties had then firſt
Engag'd my wonder; and, admiring ſtill,
And ſtill admiring, with regret ſuppos'd
The joy half loſt becauſe not ſooner found.
There, too, enamour'd of the life I lov'd,
Pathetic in its praiſe, in its purſuit
Determin'd, and poſſeſſing it at laſt
With tranſports ſuch as favour'd lovers feel,
I ſtudied, priz'd, and wiſh'd that I had known,

Ingenious Cowley! and, though now reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taſte,
I cannot but lament thy ſplendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the ſchools.
I ſtill revere thee, courtly though retir'd;
Though ſtretch'd at eaſe in Chertſey's ſilent bow'rs,
Not unemploy'd; and finding rich amends
For a loſt world in ſolitude and verſe.
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man,
Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
And, though th' Almighty Maker has throughout
Diſcriminated each from each, by ſtrokes
And touches of his hand, with ſo much art
Diverſified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all diſcern a beauty in his works,
And all can taſte them: minds that have been form'd
And tutor'd, with a reliſh more exact,
But none without ſome reliſh, none unmov'd.
It is a flame that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it: neither buſineſs, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city-life;
Whatever elſe they ſmother of true worth
In human boſoms; quench it, or abate.

villas with which London ſtands begirt,
a ſwarth Indian with his belt of beads,
e it. A breath of unadult'rate air,
glimpſe of a green paſture, how they cheer
citizen, and brace his languid frame!
in the ſtifling boſom of the town,
arden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
t ſooth the rich poſſeſſor; much confol'd,
t here and there ſome ſprigs of mournful mint,
ightſhade, or valerian, grace the well
ultivates. Theſe ſerve him with a hint
t Nature lives; that ſight-refreſhing green
ill the liv'ry ſhe delights to wear,
ugh fickly ſamples of th' exub'rant whole.
it are the caſements lin'd with creeping herbs,
prouder faſhes fronted with a range
range, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
Frenchman's * darling? are they not all proofs
: man, immur'd in cities, ſtill retains
nborn inextinguiſhable thirſt
ural ſcenes, compenſating his loſs
upplemental ſhifts, the beſt he may?
moſt unfurniſh'd with the means of life,

* Mignonette.

And they that never paſs their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning inſtinct: over-head
Suſpend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And water'd duly. There the pitcher ſtands
A fragment, and the ſpoutleſs tea-pot there;
Sad witneſſes how cloſe-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroneſs of health, and eaſe,
And contemplation, heart-conſoling joys
And harmleſs pleaſures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown; hail, rural life!
Addreſs himſelf who will to the purſuit
Of honours, or emoluments, or fame;
I ſhall not add myſelf to ſuch a chaſe,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his ſucceſs.
Some muſt be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to ev'ry man
The virtue, temper, underſtanding, taſte,
That lifts him into life; and lets him fall
Juſt in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliv'rer of an injur'd land
He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, an heart

To feel, and courage to redreſs her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity; to judges ſenſe;
To artiſts ingenuity and ſkill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wiſh for eaſe and leiſure, and ere long
Found here that leiſure and that eaſe I wiſh'd.

No forfeiture, and of its fruits he ſends
Large prelibation oft to ſaints below.
Of theſe the firſt in order, and the pledge
And confident aſſurance of the reſt,
Is liberty:—a flight into his arms
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear eſcape from tyrannizing luſt,
And full immunity from penal woe.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes and a dungeon; and his body ſerves
The triple purpoſe. In that fickly, foul,
Opprobrious reſidence, he finds them all.
Propenſe his heart to idols, he is held
In ſilly dotage on created things,
Careleſs of their Creator. And that low
And ſordid gravitation of his pow'rs
To a vile clod ſo draws him, with ſuch force
Reſiſtleſs from the centre he ſhould ſeek,
That he at laſt forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to ſink,
To reach a depth profounder ſtill, and ſtill
Profounder, in the fathomleſs abyſs
Of folly, plunging in purſuit of death.
But, ere he gain'd the comfortleſs repoſe
He ſeeks, and acquieſcence of his ſoul,

In heav'n-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from luſts oppos'd in vain,
And ſelf-reproaching conſcience. He foreſees
The fatal iſſue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune, and dignity; the loſs of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, ſupportable. Still worſe,
Far worſe than all the plagues with which his ſins
Infect his happieſt moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeleſs mis'ry. Future death,
And death ſtill future. Not an haſty ſtroke,
Like that which ſends him to the duſty grave;
But unrepealable enduring death!
Scripture is ſtill a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forg'ry, may be true;
What none but bad men wiſh exploded, muſt.
That ſcruple checks him. Riot is not loud,
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midſt
Of laughter his compunctions are ſincere;
And he abhors the jeſt by which he ſhines.
Remorſe begets reform. His maſter-luſt
Falls firſt before his reſolute rebuke,
And ſeems dethron'd and vanquiſh'd. Peace enſues,
But ſpurious and ſhort-liv'd; the puny child
Of ſelf-congratulating pride, begot
On fancied innocence. Again he falls,

And fights again; but finds his beſt eſſay
A preſage ominous, portending ſtill
Its own diſhonour by a worſe relapſe.
Till Nature, unavailing nature, foil'd
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reaſon now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cauſe,
Perverſely, which of late ſhe ſo condemn'd;
With ſhallow ſhifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the ſervice of debauch,
Cov'ring his ſhame from his offended ſight.

"Hath God indeed giv'n appetites to man,
"And ſtor'd the earth ſo plenteouſly with means
"To gratify the hunger of his wiſh;
"And doth he reprobate, and will he damn,
"The uſe of his own bounty? making firſt
"So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
"So ſtrict, that leſs than perfect muſt deſpair?
"Falſehood! which whoſo but ſuſpects of truth
"Diſhonours God, and makes a ſlave of man.
"Do they themſelves, who undertake for hire
"The teacher's office, and diſpenſe at large
"Their weekly dole of edifying ſtrains,
"Attend to their own muſic? have they faith
"In what with ſuch ſolemnity of tone

"And geſture they propound to our belief?
"Nay—conduct hath the loudeſt tongue. The voice
"Is but an inſtrument, on which the prieſt
"May play what tune he pleaſes. In the deed,
"The unequivocal authentic deed,
"We find ſound argument, we read the heart."

Such reas'nings (if that name muſt need belong
T' excuſes in which reaſon has no part)
Serve to compoſe a ſpirit well inclin'd
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And ſin without diſturbance. Often urg'd,
(As often as libidinous diſcourſe
Exhauſted, he reſorts to ſolemn themes
Of theological and grave import)
They gain at laſt his unreſerv'd aſſent;
Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of luſt, and on the anvil of deſpair,
He ſlights the ſtrokes of conſcience. Nothing moves,
Or nothing much, his conſtancy in ill;
Vain tamp'ring has but foſter'd his diſeaſe;
'Tis deſp'rate, and he ſleeps the ſleep of death!
Haſte now, philoſopher, and ſet him free.
Charm the deaf ſerpent wiſely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitneſs, moral truth
How lovely, and the moral ſenſe how ſure,

Conſulted and obey'd, to guide his ſteps
Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in ſuch a cauſe. Spend all the pow'rs
Of rant and rhapſody in virtue's praiſe:
Be moſt ſublimely good, verboſely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy proſe,
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verſe.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high ſounding braſs,
Smitten in vain! ſuch muſic cannot charm
Th' eclipſe that intercepts truth's heav'nly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide-wand'ring ſoul.
The STILL SMALL VOICE is wanted. He muſt I
Whoſe word leaps forth at once to its effect;
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the ſlave a freeman. 'Tis a char
That turns to ridicule the turgid ſpeech
And ſtately tone of moraliſts, who boaſt,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to ſmooth
The ſhag of ſavage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in ſong:
But transformation of apoſtate man
From fool to wiſe, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And he by means in philoſophic eyes

al and worthy of diſdain, achieves
wonder; humanizing what is brute
he loſt kind, extracting from the lips
aſps their venom, overpow'ring ſtrength
weakneſs, and hoſtility by love.

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cauſe
bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deſerve,
Receive proud recompenſe. We give in charge
Their names to the ſweet lyre. Th' hiſtoric muſe,
Proud of the treaſure, marches with it down
To lateſt times; and ſculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in ſtone and ever-during braſs
To guard them, and t' immortalize her truſt:
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To thoſe who, poſted at the ſhrine of truth,
Have fall'n in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well ſpent in ſuch a ſtriſe, may earn indeed,
And for a time enſure, to his lov'd land
The ſweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs ſtruggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is ſhed
In confirmation of the nobleſt claim—
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To ſoar, and to anticipate the ſkies!

Yet few remember them. They liv'd unkn
Till perſecution dragg'd them into fame,
And chas'd them up to heav'n. Their aſhe
—No marble tells us whither. With their
No bard embalms and ſanctifies his ſong:
And hiſtory, ſo warm on meaner themes,
Is old on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious ſuff'rers little praiſe *.

He is the freeman whom the truth makes
And all are ſlaves beſide. There's not a cha
That helliſh foes, confed'rate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he caſts it off
With as much eaſe as Samſon his green wyth
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and, though poor perhaps compar
With thoſe whoſe manſions glitter in his figh
Calls the delightful ſcen'ry all his own.
His are the mountains, and the vallies his,
And the reſplendent rivers. His t' enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inſpir'd,
Can lift to heaven an unpreſumptuous eye,
And ſmiling ſay—"My Father made them

* See Hume.

Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphaſis of int'reſt his,
Whoſe eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whoſe heart with praiſe, and whoſe exalted mir
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and ſtill upholds, a wo
So cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded ſoil, and ye may waſte much good
In ſenſeleſs riot; but ye will not find,
In feaſt or in the chaſe, in ſong or dance,
A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd
Of uſurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer uſe of your's than you.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
Of no mean city; plann'd or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the ſea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the ſame in ev'ry ſtate;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whoſe ev'ry day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it leſs:
For he has wings that neither ſickneſs, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook ſo narrow but he ſpreads them there

Acquaint thyſelf with God, if thou would'ſt taſte
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou ſhalt perceive that thou waſt blind before:
Thine eye ſhall be inſtructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, ſhall reliſh, with divine delight
'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone
And eyes intent upon the ſcanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedleſs of the ſcene outſpread
Beneath, beyond, and ſtretching far away
From inland regions to the diſtant main.
Man views it, and admires; but reſts content
With what he views. The landſcape has his praiſe,
But not its author. Unconcern'd who form'd

ed ere it was.
ike merely, but for his
faſhion'd it, he gives it praiſe;
a earth reſulting, as it ought,
owledg'd ſov'reign, finds at once
prietor in Him.
es him, or receives ſublim'd
or learns at leaſt t' employ
the pow'rs ſhe own'd before,
things what, with ſtupid gaze
till then ſhe overlook'd—
'nly light, gilding all forms
the vaſt and the minute;
ſuous footſteps of the God
ts luſtre to an inſect's wing,
his throne upon the rolling worlds.
:rſant with heav'n, ſhe often holds
fair miniſters of light to man,
ie ſkies nightly with ſilent pomp,
erence. Inquires what ſtrains were they
:h heav'n rang, when ev'ry ſtar, in haſte
ate the new-created earth,
a voice, and all the ſons of God
:or joy.—" Tell me, ye ſhining hoſts,
avigate a ſea that knows no ſtorms,
th a vault unſullied with a cloud,

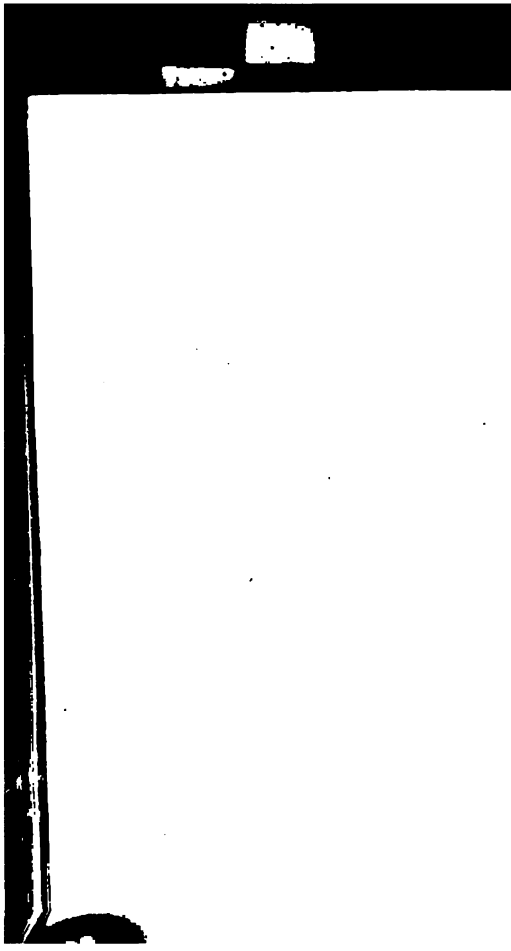
" If from your elevation, whence ye view
" Diſtinctly ſcenes inviſible to man,
" And ſyſtems of whoſe birth no tidings yet
" Have reach'd this nether world, ye ſpy a ra
" Favour'd as our's; tranſgreſſors from the w
" And haſting to a grave, yet doom'd to riſe,
" And to poſſeſs a brighter heav'n than your'
" As one who long detain'd on foreign ſhores
" Pants to return, and when he ſees afar
" His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd
" From the green wave emerging, darts an ey
" Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
" So I with animated hopes behold,
" And many an aching wiſh, your beamy fire
" That ſhow like beacons in the blue abyſs,
" Ordain'd to guide th' embodied ſpirit home
" From toilſome life to never-ending reſt,
" Love kindles as I gaze. I feel deſires
" That give aſſurance of their own ſucceſs,
" And that, infus'd from heav'n, muſt thithe

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, myſterious word!
Which whoſo ſees no longer wanders loſt,
With intellects bemaz'd in endleſs doubt,
But runs the road of wiſdom. Thou haſt trod

ieans that were not till by thee employ'd,
that had never been hadſt thou in ſtrength
s, or leſs benevolent than ſtrong.
e thy witneſſes, who ſpeak thy pow'r
)dneſs infinite, but ſpeak in ears
:ar not, or receive not their report.
thy creatures teſtify of thee
u proclaim thyſelf. Their's is indeed
ing voice; but 'tis the praiſe of thine
nom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
h the boon gives talents for its uſe.
u art heard, imaginations vain
he heart, and fables falſe as hell;
em'd oracular, lure down to death
nform'd and heedleſs ſouls of men.
: to chance, blind chance, ourſelves as blind,
ry of thy work; which yet appears
and unimpeachable of blame,
ging human ſcrutiny, and prov'd
ilful moſt when moſt ſeverely judg'd.
nce is not; or is not where thou reign'ſt r
vidence forbids that fickle pow'r
r ſhe be that works but to confound)
her wild vagaries with thy laws.
s we dote, refuſing while we can
ion, and inventing to ourſelves

Gods ſuch as guilt makes welcome; gods that ſleep,
Or diſregard our follies, or that ſit
Amus'd ſpectators of this buſtling ſtage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure;
Made ſuch by thee, we love thee for that cauſe
For which we ſhunn'd and hated thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the ſoul, and by a flaſh from heav'n
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till thou haſt touch'd them; 'tis the voice of ſong—
A loud hoſanna ſent from all thy works;
Which he that hears it with a ſhout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the gen'ral praiſe.
In that bleſt moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, diſcloſes with a ſmile
The author of her beauties, who, retir'd
Behind his own creation, works unſeen
By the impure, and hears his pow'r denied.
Thou art the ſource and centre of all minds,
Their only point of reſt, eternal Word!
From thee departing, they are loſt, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that ſooths the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad ſucceſs,

His ſtrength to ſuffer, and his will to ſerve.
But oh thou bounteous giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyſelf the crown!
Give what thou canſt, without thee we are poor;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.



THE TASK.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

Bells at a diſtance.—Their effect.—A fine noon in winter.—A ſheltered walk.—Meditation better than books.—Our familiarity with the courſe of nature makes it appear leſs wonderful than it is.—The transformation that ſpring effects in a ſhrubbery deſcribed.—A miſtake concerning the courſe of nature corrected.—God maintains it by an unremitted act.—The amuſements faſhionable at this hour of the day reproved.—Animals happy, a delightful ſight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from ſcripture. That proof illuſtrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful deſtruction of them.—Their good and uſeful properties inſiſted on.—An apology for the encomiums beſtowed by the author on animals.—Inſtances of man's extravagant praiſe of man.—The groans of the creation ſhall have an end.—A view taken for the reſtoration of all things.—An invocation and an invitation of him who ſhall bring it to paſs.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uſeleſſneſs.—Concluſion.

THE TASK.

BOOK VI.

IE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

ʀʀ is in ſouls a ſympathy with ſounds;
as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd
melting airs, or martial, briſk, or grave;
chord in uniſon with what we hear
ch'd within us, and the heart replies.
oft the muſic of thoſe village bells,
g at intervals upon the ear
lence ſweet, now dying all away,
ealing loud again, and louder ſtill,
and ſonorous, as the gale comes on!
eaſy force it opens all the cells
: mem'ry ſlept. Wherever I have heard
dred melody, the ſcene recurs,

And with it all its pleaſures and its pains.
Such comprehenſive views the ſpirit takes,
That in a few ſhort moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his courſe)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retroſpect the journey ſeems,
It ſeem'd not always ſhort; the rugged path,
And proſpect oft ſo dreary and forlorn,
Mov'd many a ſigh at its diſheart'ning length.
Yet, feeling preſent evils, while the paſt
Faintly impreſs the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wiſh time ſpent revok'd,
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
We miſs'd that happineſs we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his ſon's beſt friend!
A father, whoſe authority, in ſhow
When moſt ſevere, and muſt'ring all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whoſe favour, like the clouds of ſpring, might low'r
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a bleſſing in its darkeſt frown,
Threat'ning at once and nouriſhing the plant.
We lov'd, but not enough, the gentle hand
That rear'd us. At a thoughtleſs age, allur'd
By ev'ry gilded folly, we renounc'd

t'ring ſide, and wilfully forewent
nverſe which we now in vain regret.
dly would the man recall to life
's neglected fire! a mother too,
fter friend, perhaps more gladly ſtill,
e demand them at the gates of death.
las, ſince they went, ſubdu'd and tam'd
yful humour; he could now endure,
f grown ſober in the vale of tears)
l a parent's preſence no reſtraint.
to underſtand a treaſure's worth
e has ſtol'n away the ſlighted good,
of half the poverty we feel,
kes the world the wilderneſs it is.
that pray at all pray oft amiſs,
king grace t' improve the prize they hold,
arge a wiſer ſuit than aſking more.

light was winter in his rougheſt mood;
ming ſharp and clear. But now at noon
e ſouthern ſide of the ſlant hills,
ere the woods fence off the northern blaſt,
on ſmiles, reſigning all its rage,
the warmth of May. The vault is blue
a cloud, and white without a ſpeck
zling ſplendour of the ſcene below.

armony comes o'er the vale;
n the trees I view th' embattled tow'r
the music. I again perceive
ng influence of the wafted ſtrains,
in ſoft muſings as I tread
, ſtill verdant, under oaks and elms,
ſtſpread branches overarch the glade.
, though moveable through all its length
wind ſways it, has yet well ſuffic'd,
ttercepting in their ſilent fall
equent flakes, has kept a path for me.
ife is here, or none that hinders thought.
edbreaſt warbles ſtill, but is content
ſlender notes, and more than half ſuppreſs'd;
'd with his ſolitude, and flitting light
n ſpray to ſpray, where'er he reſts he ſhakes
m many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
at tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
lneſs, accompanied with ſounds ſo ſoft,
harms more than ſilence. Meditation here
ay think down hours to moments. Here the heart
ay give an uſeful leſſon to the head,
And learning wiſer grow without his books.
Knowledge and wiſdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;

Wiſdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable maſs,
The mere materials with which wiſdom builds,
Till ſmooth'd and ſquar'd and fitted to its place,
Does but incumber whom it ſeems t' enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd ſo much;
Wiſdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not ſeldom taliſmans and ſpells,
By which the magic art of ſhrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
Some to the faſcination of a name
Surrender judgment, hood-wink'd. Some the ſtyle
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them by a tune entranc'd.
While ſloth reduces more, too weak to bear
The inſupportable fatigue of thought,
And ſwallowing, therefore, without pauſe or choice,
The total griſt unſifted, huſks and all.
But trees and rivulets whoſe rapid courſe
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And ſheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primroſe ere her time
Peeps through the moſs that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no ſtudent. Wiſdom there, and truth,
Not ſhy, as in the world, and to be won

But let the months go round, a few ſhort months,
And all ſhall be reſtor'd. Theſe naked ſhoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry muſic, ſighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And, more aſpiring, and with ampler ſpread,
Shall boaſt new charms, and more than they have loſt.
Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publiſh, even to the diſtant eye,
Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
In ſtreaming gold; ſyringa, iv'ry pure;
The ſcentleſs and the ſcented roſe; this red,
And of an humbler growth, the * other tall,
And throwing up into the darkeſt gloom
Of neighb'ring cypreſs, or more ſable yew,
Her ſilver globes, light as the foamy ſurf
That the wind ſevers from the broken wave;
The lilac, various in array, now white,
Now ſanguine, and her beauteous head now ſet
With purple ſpikes pyramidal, as if,
Studious of ornament, yet unreſolv'd
Which hue ſhe moſt approv'd, ſhe choſe them all;
Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compenſating her ſickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late;

* The Guelder-roſe.

But how ſhould matter occupy a charge
Dull as it is, and ſatisfy a law
So vaſt in its demands, unleſs impell'd
To ceaſeleſs ſervice by a ceaſeleſs force,
And under preſſure of ſome conſcious cauſe?
The Lord of all, himſelf through all diffus'd,
Suſtains, and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whoſe cauſe is God. He feeds the ſecret fire
By which the mighty proceſs is maintain'd,
Who ſleeps not, is not weary; in whoſe ſight
Slow circling ages are as tranſient days;
Whoſe work is without labour; whoſe deſigns
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whoſe beneficence no charge exhauſts.
Him blind antiquity profan'd, not ſerv'd,
With ſelf-taught rites, and under various names,
Female and male. Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddeſſes and gods
That were not; and commending, as they would,
To each ſome province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under one. One ſpirit—His
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
Rules univerſal nature. Not a flow'r
But ſhows ſome touch, in freckle, ſtreak, or ſtain,

his unrivall'd pencil. He inſpires
eir balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
d bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
grains as countleſs as the ſea-ſide ſands,
e forms with which he ſprinkles all the earth.
ppy who walks with him! whom what he finds
flavour or of ſcent in fruit or flow'r,
what he views of beautiful or grand
nature, from the broad majeſtic oak
the green blade that twinkles in the ſun,
ompts with remembrance of a preſent God!
s preſence, who made all ſo fair, perceiv'd,
akes all ſtill fairer. As with him no ſcene
dreary, ſo with him all ſeaſons pleaſe.
hough winter had been none, had man been true,
d earth be puniſh'd for its tenant's ſake,
t not in vengeance; as this ſmiling ſky,
ſoon ſucceeding ſuch an angry night,
nd theſe diſſolving ſnows, and this clear ſtream
ecov'ring faſt its liquid muſic, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well ſtrung and tun'd
o contemplation, and within his reach
ſcene ſo friendly to his fav'rite taſk,
ould waſte attention at the chequer'd board,
is hoſt of wooden warriors to and fro

Marching and countermarching, with an e
As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridg'd
And furrow'd into ſtorms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?—
Nor envies he aught more their idle ſport,
Who pant with application miſapplied
To trivial toys, and, puſhing iv'ry balls
Acroſs a velvet level, feel a joy
Akin to rapture when the bawble finds
Its deſtin'd goal, of difficult acceſs.—
Nor deems he wiſer him, who gives his noo
To miſs, the mercer's plague, from ſhop t
Wand'ring and litt'ring with unfolded ſilks
The poliſh'd counter, and approving none,
Or promiſing with ſmiles to call again.—
Nor him, who by his vanity ſeduc'd,
And ſooth'd into a dream that he diſcerns
The diff'rence of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction: ſtation'd t
As duly as the Langford of the ſhow,
With glaſs at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accompliſh'd in the fulſome ca
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with eaſ
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,

Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it paſs—but never bids!

Here, unmoleſted, through whatever ſign
The ſun proceeds, I wander. Neither miſt,
Nor freezing ſky nor ſultry, checking me,
Nor ſtranger intermeddling with my joy.
Ev'n in the ſpring and play-time of the year,
That calls th' unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a ſportive train,
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daiſies, or to pick
A cheap but wholeſome ſallad from the brook,
Theſe ſhades are all my own. The tim'rous hare,
Grown ſo familiar with her frequent gueſt,
Scarce ſhuns me; and the ſtock-dove, unalarm'd,
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor ſuſpends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in ſome lonely elm
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outſlept the winter, ventures forth
To friſk awhile, and baſk in the warm ſun,
The ſquirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play:
He ſees me, and at once, ſwift as a bird,
Aſcends the neighb'ring beech; there whiſks his bruſh,

And perks his ears, and ſtamps and cries aloud,
With all the prettineſs of feign'd alarm,
And anger inſignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowſhip, as being void
Of ſympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendſhip both, that is not pleas'd
With ſight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happineſs augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts acroſs the glade
When none purſues, through mere delight of heart,
And ſpirits buoyant with exceſs of glee;
The horſe as wanton, and almoſt as fleet,
That ſkims the ſpacious meadow at full ſpeed,
Then ſtops and ſnorts, and, throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving firſt from one
That leads the dance a ſummons to be gay,
Though wild their ſtrange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet reſolv'd with one conſent
To give ſuch act and utt'rance as they may
To ecſtaſy too big to be ſuppreſs'd—
Theſe, and a thouſand images of bliſs,
With which kind nature graces ev'ry ſcene

Where cruel man defeats not her deſign,
Impart to the benevolent, who wiſh
All that are capable of pleaſure pleas'd,
A far ſuperior happineſs to their's,
The comfort of a reaſonable joy.

Man ſcarce had ris'n, obedient to his call
Who form'd him from the duſt, his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was ſince.
God ſet the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wond'ring ſtood
The new-made monarch, while before him paſs'd,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, ſummon'd from their various haunts
To ſee their ſov'reign, and confeſs his ſway.
Vaſt was his empire, abſolute his pow'r,
Or bounded only by a law, whoſe force
'Twas his ſublimeſt privilege to feel
And own—the law of univerſal love.
He rul'd with meekneſs, they obey'd with joy;
No cruel purpoſe lurk'd within his heart,
And no diſtruſt of his intent in their's.
So Eden was a ſcene of harmleſs ſport,
Where kindneſs on his part who rul'd the whole
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cauſe for fear.

But ſin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That ſource of evils not exhauſted yet,
Was puniſh'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witneſs'd! Ev'ry hear
Each animal of ev'ry name, conceiv'd
A jealouſy and an inſtinctive fear,
And, conſcious of ſome danger, either fled
Precipitate the loath'd abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in ſuch angry ſort,
As taught him, too, to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driv'n from Paradiſe; and in that hour
The ſeeds of cruelty, that ſince have ſwell'd
To ſuch gigantic and enormous growth,
Were ſown in human nature's fruitful ſoil.
Hence date the perſecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardleſs of their plaints. To make him ſport
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his baſe gluttony, are cauſes good
And juſt, in his account, why bird and beaſt
Should ſuffer torture, and the ſtreams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impal'd.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Wag'd with defenceleſs innocence, while he,

Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They fear'd, and, as his perfect image, lov'd.
The wilderness is their's, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrol'd;
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain!
The lion tells him—I am monarch here!
And, if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through gen'rous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man; those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection.—Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying, for some venial fault,
Under discretion of the knotted scourge—

Witneſs the patient ox, with ſtripes and yells
Driv'n to the ſlaughter, goaded, as he runs,
To madneſs; while the ſavage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic ſufferer's fury, ſpent
Upon the guiltleſs paſſenger o'erthrown.
He, too, is witneſs, nobleſt of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horſe:
With unſuſpecting readineſs he takes
His murd'rer on his back, and, puſh'd all day,
With bleeding ſides and flanks that heave for life,
To the far-diſtant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy ſhows who needs ſo much!
Does law, ſo jealous in the cauſe of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent?—None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boaſts
(As if barbarity were high deſert)
Th' inglorious feat, and, clamorous in praiſe
Of the poor brute, ſeems wiſely to ſuppoſe
The honours of his matchleſs horſe his own!
But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,
Is regiſter'd in heav'n; and theſe, no doubt,
Have each their record, with a curſe annex'd.
Man may diſmiſs compaſſion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charg'd the Jew
T' aſſiſt his foe's down fallen beaſt to riſe;
And when the buſh-exploring boy, that ſeiz'd

The young, to let the parent bird go free;
Prov'd he not plainly that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an int'reſt all,
All, in the univerſal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold
The fleſh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on pow'r of life and death.
But read the inſtrument, and mark it well:
Th' oppreſſion of a tyrannous control
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through ſin,
Feed on the ſlain, but ſpare the living brute!

The Governor of all, himſelf to all
So bountiful, in whoſe attentive ear
The unfledg'd raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unaſſuag'd, has interpos'd,
Not ſeldom, his avenging arm, to ſmite
Th' injurious trampler upon nature's law,
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardneſs of a Balaam's heart;
And, prophet as he was, he might not ſtrike
The blameleſs animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode. Her opportune offence

Sav'd him, or th' unrelenting ſeer had died.
He ſees that human equity is ſlack
To interfere, though in ſo juſt a cauſe;
And makes the taſk his own. Inſpiring dumb
And helpleſs victims with a ſenſe ſo keen
Of inj'ry, with ſuch knowledge of their ſtrength,
And ſuch ſagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beaſt has ſeem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of ſound intelligence rehears'd,
(If ſuch who plead for Providence may ſeem
In modern eyes) ſhall make the doctrine clear.—

Where England, ſtretch'd towards the ſetting ſ
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the weſtern wave,
Dwelt young Miſagathus; a ſcorner he
Of God and goodneſs, atheiſt in oſtent,
Vicious in act, in temper ſavage-fierce.
He journey'd; and his chance was as he went
To join a trav'ller, of far diff'rent note—
Evander, fam'd for piety, for years
Deſerving honour, but for wiſdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A ſtranger to the manners of the youth,
Whoſe face, too, was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,

O'er the green ſummit of the rocks, whoſe baſe
Beats back the roaring ſurge, ſcarce heard ſo high.
The charity that warm'd his heart was mov'd
At ſight of the man-monſter. With a ſmile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wiſh'd
Much to perſuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harſhly thunder'd forth or rudely preſs'd,
But, like his purpoſe, gracious, kind, and ſweet.
"And doſt thou dream," the impenetrable man
Exclaim'd, "that me the lullabies of age,
"And fantaſies of dotards ſuch as thou,
"Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
"Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
"Need no ſuch aids as ſuperſtition lends
"To ſteel their hearts againſt the dread of death."
He ſpoke, and to the precipice at hand
Puſh'd with a madman's fury. Fancy ſhrinks,
And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought
Of ſuch a gulph as he deſign'd his grave.
But, though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational, his ſteed
Declin'd the death, and wheeling ſwiftly round,
Or e'er his hoof had preſs'd the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, ſav'd againſt his will!
The frenzy of the brain may be redreſs'd

By med'cine well applied, but without grace
The heart's infanity admits no cure.
Enrag'd the more, by what might have reform'
His horrible intent, again he ſought
Deſtruction, with a zeal to be deſtroy'd,
With ſounding whip, and rowels died in blood.
But ſtill in vain. The Providence, that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beaſt,
Spar'd yet again th' ignobler, for his ſake.
And now, his proweſs prov'd, and his ſincere
Incurable obduracy evinc'd,
His rage grew cool; and, pleas'd perhaps t' hav
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of ſome complacence he reſum'd
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, ſtill where he was left
Fixt motionleſs, and petrified with dread.
So on they far'd. Diſcourſe on other themes
Enſuing, ſeem'd t' obliterate the paſt;
And, tamer far for ſo much fury ſhown,
(As is the courſe of raſh and fiery men)
The rude companion ſmil'd, as if transform'd.
But 'twas a tranſient calm. A ſtorm was near,
An unſuſpected ſtorm. His hour was come.
The impious challenger of Pow'r divine
Was now to learn that Heav'n, though ſlow to

Is never with impunity defied.
His horſe, as he had caught his maſter's mood,
Snorting, and ſtarting into ſudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be control'd,
Ruſh'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, ſtood.
At once the ſhock unſeated him: he flew
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier; and, immers'd
Deep in the flood, found, when he ſought it not,
The death he had deſerv'd—and died alone!
So God wrought double juſtice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to ſafe revenge.

I would not enter on my liſt of friends
(Though grac'd with poliſh'd manners and fine ſenſe,
Yet wanting ſenſibility) the man
Who needleſsly ſets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent ſtep may cruſh the ſnail
That crawls at ev'ning in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aſide, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathſome to the ſight,
And charg'd perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A viſitor unwelcome, into ſcenes
Sacred to neatneſs and repoſe—th' alcove,
The chamber, or refectory—may die:

A neceſſary act incurs no blame.
Not ſo when, held within their proper bound
And guiltleſs of offence, they range the air,
Or take their paſtime in the ſpacious field:
There they are privileg'd; and he that hunt
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Diſturbs th' economy of nature's realm,
Who, when ſhe form'd, deſign'd them an ab
The ſum is this.—If man's convenience, he
Or ſafety, interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and muſt extinguiſh their's
Elſe they are all—the meaneſt things that ar
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the firſt,
Who, in his ſov'reign wiſdom, made them a
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your
To love it too. The ſpring-time of your ye
Is ſoon diſhonour'd and defil'd in moſt
By budding ills, that aſk a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas! none ſooner ſh
If unreſtrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, moſt dev'liſh of them all.
Mercy to him that ſhows it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty
And he that ſhows none, being ripe in years

And conſcious of the outrage he commits,
Shall ſeek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Diſtinguiſh'd much by reaſon, and ſtill more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exiſt but for our ſake,
Which, having ſerv'd us, periſh, we are held
Accountable; and God, ſome future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for th' abuſe
Of what he deems no mean or trivial truſt.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help than we on their's.
Their ſtrength, or ſpeed, or vigilance, were giv'n
In aid of our defects. In ſome are found
Such teachable and apprehenſive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with th' expertneſs of the brute's in their's,
Are oft-times vanquiſh'd and thrown far behind.
Some ſhow that nice ſagacity of ſmell,
And read with ſuch diſcernment, in the port
And figure of the man, his ſecret aim,
That oft we owe our ſafety to a ſkill
We could not teach, and muſt deſpair to learn.
But learn we might, if not too proud to ſtoop
To quadrupede inſtructors, many a good
And uſeful quality, and virtue too,

Rarely exemplified among ourſelves.
Attachment never to be wean'd, or chang'd
By any change of fortune; proof alike
Againſt unkindneſs, abſence, and neglect;
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp; and gratitude for ſmall
And trivial favours, laſting as the life,
And gliſt'ning even in the dying eye.

Man praiſes man. Deſert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thouſand ſit
Patiently preſent at a ſacred ſong,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(Oh wonderful effect of muſic's pow'r!)
Meſſiah's eulogy for Handel's ſake!
But leſs, methinks, than ſacrilege might ſerve—
(For was it leſs, what heathen would have dar'd
To ſtrip Jove's ſtatue of his oaken wreath,
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much leſs might ſerve, when all that we deſign
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a muſician's praiſe.
Remember Handel? Who, that was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him; and, while we praiſe

A talent ſo divine, remember too
That His moſt holy book from whom it came
Was never meant, was never us'd before,
To buckram out the mem'ry of a man.
But huſh!—the muſe perhaps is too ſevere;
And, with a gravity beyond the ſize
And meaſure of th' offence, rebukes a deed
Leſs impious than abſurd, and owing more
To want of judgment than to wrong deſign.
So in the chapel of old Ely Houſe,
When wand'ring Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was freſh,
The ſimple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two ſtaves,
Sung to the praiſe and glory of King George!
—Man praiſes man; and Garrick's mem'ry next,
When time hath ſomewhat mellow'd it, and made
The idol of our worſhip while he liv'd
The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world ſhall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his ſhrine.
The theatre, too ſmall, ſhall ſuffocate
Its ſqueez'd contents, and more than it admits
Shall ſigh at their excluſion, and return
Ungratified. For there ſome noble lord
Shall ſtuff his ſhoulders with king Richard's bunch,

Or wrap himſelf in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And ſtrut, and ſtorm, and ſtraddle, ſtamp, and
To ſhow the world how Garrick did not act—
For Garrick was a worſhipper himſelf;
He drew the liturgy, and fram'd the rites
And ſolemn ceremonial of the day,
And call'd the world to worſhip on the banks
Of Avon, fam'd in ſong. Ah, pleaſant proof
That piety has ſtill in human hearts
Some place, a ſpark or two not yet extinct.
The mulb'ry-tree was hung with blooming wrea
The mulb'ry-tree ſtood centre of the dance;
The mulb'ry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulb'ry-tree
Supplied ſuch relics as devotion holds
Still ſacred, and preſerves with pious care.
So 'twas an hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd,
Doubtleſs, much edified, and all refreſh'd.
—Man praiſes man. The rabble, all alive,
From tippling benches, cellars, ſtalls, and ſtyes
Swarm in the ſtreets. The ſtateſman of the da
A pompous and ſlow-moving pageant, comes.
Some ſhout him, and ſome hang upon his car,
To gaze in 's eyes, and bleſs him. Maidens w
Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy;

ıl'e others, not ſo ſatisfied, unhorſe
e gilded equipage, and turning looſe
ı ſteeds, uſurp a place they well deſerve.
ıy? what has charm'd them? Hath he ſav'd the ſtate?
. Doth he purpoſe its ſalvation? No.
chanting novelty, that moon at full,
ıat finds out ev'ry crevice of the head
ıat is not ſound and perfect, hath in their's
rought this diſturbance. But the wane is near,
ıd his own cattle muſt ſuffice him ſoon.
ıus idly do we waſte the breath of praiſe,
ıd dedicate a tribute, in its uſe
ıd juſt direction ſacred, to a thing
ɔom'd to the duſt, or lodg'd already there!
ıcomium in old time was poets' work;
ıt, poets having laviſhly long ſince
thauſted all materials of the art,
ɜe taſk now falls into the public hand;
nd I, contented with an humble theme,
ave pour'd my ſtream of panegyric down
he vale of nature, where it creeps, and winds
mong her lovely works with a ſecure
nd unambitious courſe, reflecting clear,
not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
nd I am recompens'd, and deem the toils
f poetry not loſt, if verſe of mine

May ſtand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heav'n has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets ſung,
Whoſe fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of reſt, the promis'd ſabbath, comes.
Six thouſand years of ſorrow have well-nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and diſaſtrous courſe
Over a ſinful world; and what remains
Of this tempeſtuous ſtate of human things
Is merely as the working of a ſea
Before a calm, that rocks itſelf to reſt:
For He, whoſe car the winds are, and the clouds
The duſt that waits upon his ſultry march,
When ſin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall viſit earth in mercy; ſhall deſcend,
Propitious, in his chariot pav'd with love;
And what his ſtorms have blaſted and defac'd
For man's revolt ſhall with a ſmile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too ſweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch:
Nor can the wonders it records be ſung
To meaner muſic, and not ſuffer loſs.

en a poet, or when one like me,
o rove among poetic flow'rs,
poor in ſkill to rear them, lights at laſt
e fair theme, ſome theme divinely fair,
he impulſe and the ſpur he feels
it praiſe proportion'd to its worth,
t t' attempt it, arduous as he deems
our, were a taſk more arduous ſtill.

enes ſurpaſſing fable, and yet true,
f accompliſh'd bliſs! which who can ſee,
but in diſtant proſpect, and not feel
refreſh'd with foretaſte of the joy?
f gladneſs water all the earth,
he all climes with beauty; the reproach
nneſs is paſt. The fruitful field
vith abundance; and the land, once lean,
e only in its own diſgrace,
o ſee its thiſtly curſe repeal'd.
ious ſeaſons woven into one,
t one ſeaſon an eternal ſpring,
len fears no blight, and needs no fence,
e is none to covet, all are full.
, and the libbard, and the bear
ith the fearleſs flocks; all baſk at noon
, or all gambol in the ſhade

Of the ſame grove, and drink one common
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the ſerpent now: the mother ſees,
And ſmiles to ſee, her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the creſted wor
To ſtroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worſhip man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place
That creeping peſtilence is driv'n away;
The breath of heav'n has chas'd it. In the
No paſſion touches a diſcordant ſtring,
But all is harmony and love. Diſeaſe
Is not: the pure and uncontam'nate blood
Holds its due courſe, nor fears the froſt of
One ſong employs all nations; and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was ſlain for u
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From diſtant mountains catch the flying joy
Till, nation after nation taught the ſtrain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hoſanna round.
Behold the meaſure of the promiſe fill'd;
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a ſun the ſacred city ſhines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth

hat light; the glory of all lands
her; unbounded is her joy,
s her increaſe. Thy rams are there,
, and the flocks of Kedar there;
s of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
's ſpicy groves, pay tribute there.
n all her gates: upon her walls,
r ſtreets, and in her ſpacious courts,
alvation. Eaſtern Java there
th the native of the fartheſt weſt;
iopia ſpreads abroad the hand,
hips. Her report has travell'd forth
nds. From ev'ry clime they come
y beauty and to ſhare thy joy.
an aſſembly ſuch as earth
r, ſuch as Heav'n ſtoops down to ſee.

reav'nward all things tend. For all were once
and all muſt be at length reſtor'd.
as greatly purpos'd; who would elſe
honour'd works himſelf endure
r, and be wrong'd without redreſs.
en, and wheel away a ſhatter'd world,

doth and Kedar, the ſons of Iſhmael, and progenitors of
, in the prophetic ſcriptures here alluded to, may be
conſidered as repreſentatives of the Gentiles at large.

Ye ſlow-revolving ſeaſons! we would ſee
(A ſight to which our eyes are ſtrangers yet)
A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
And ſuffer for its crime; would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleaſant in itſelf what pleaſes him.
Here ev'ry drop of honey hides a ſting;
Worms wind themſelves into our ſweeteſt flow'rs;
And ev'n the joy that haply ſome poor heart
Derives from heav'n, pure as the fountain is,
Is ſullied in the ſtream, taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at beſt impure.
Oh for a world in principle as chaſte
As this is groſs and ſelfiſh! over which
Cuſtom and prejudice ſhall bear no ſway,
That govern all things here, ſhould'ring aſide
The meek and modeſt truth, and forcing her
To ſeek a refuge from the tongue of ſtrife
In nooks obſcure, far from the ways of men:—
Where violence ſhall never lift the ſword,
Nor cunning juſtify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears:—
Where he that fills an office ſhall eſteem
Th' occaſion it preſents of doing good
More than the perquiſite:—where law ſhall ſpeak
Seldom, and never but as wiſdom prompts

And equity; not jealous more to guard
A worthleſs form, than to decide aright:—
Where faſhion ſhall not ſanctify abuſe,
Nor ſmooth good-breeding (ſupplemental grace)
With lean performance ape the work of love!

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth;
And thou haſt made it thine by purchaſe ſince,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy ſaints proclaim thee king, and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy ſaints proclaim thee king, and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they ſee
The dawn of thy laſt advent, long-deſir'd,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for ſafety to the falling rocks.
The very ſpirit of the world is tir'd
Of its own taunting queſtion, aſk'd ſo long,
"Where is the promiſe of your Lord's approach?"
The infidel has ſhot his bolts away,
Till his exhauſted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted ſhafts that have recoil'd,

And aims them at the ſhield of truth again.
The veil is rent, rent too by prieſtly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes;
And all the myſteries to faith propos'd,
Inſulted and traduc'd, are caſt aſide,
As uſeleſs, to the moles and to the bats.
They now are deem'd the faithful, and are prais'd
Who, conſtant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's ſake.
Blind, and in love with darkneſs! yet ev'n theſe
Worthy, compar'd with ſycophants, who knee
Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fa
The world takes little thought. Who will may pr
And what they will. All paſtors are alike
To wand'ring ſheep, reſolv'd to follow none.
Two gods divide them all—Pleaſure and Gain:
For theſe they live, they ſacrifice to theſe,
And in their ſervice wage perpetual war
With conſcience and with thee. Luſt in their he
And miſchief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other: ſtubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own diſgrace.
Thy prophets ſpeak of ſuch; and, noting down
The features of the laſt degen'rate times,

Exhibit ev'ry lineament of theſe.
Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the reſt,
Due to thy laſt and moſt effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conqueſt of a world!

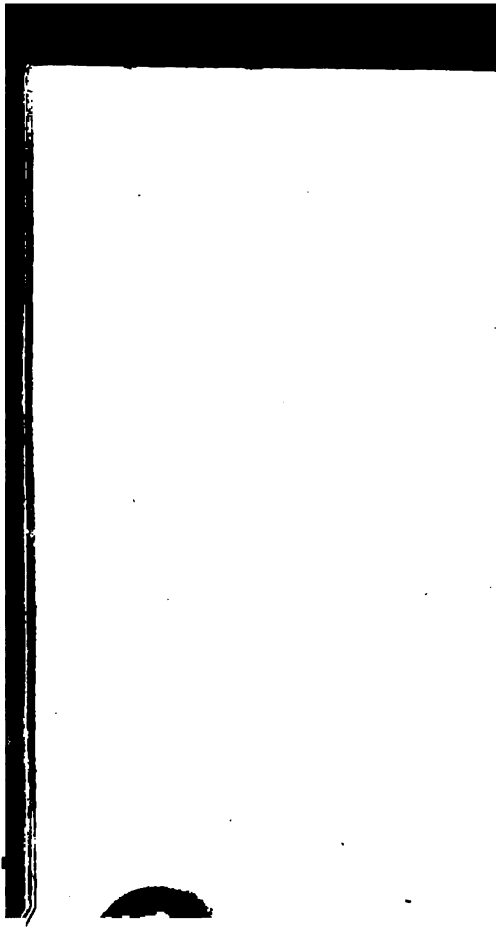
He is the happy man, whoſe life ev'n now
Shows ſomewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obſcure but tranquil ſtate,
Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to chooſe,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happineſs; beſpeak him one
Content indeed to ſojourn while he muſt
Below the ſkies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her buſy ſearch
Of objects, more illuſtrious in her view;
And, occupied as earneſtly as ſhe,
Though more ſublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She ſcorns his pleaſures, for ſhe knows them not;
He ſeeks not her's, for he has prov'd them vain.
He cannot ſkim the ground like ſummer birds
Purſuing gilded flies; and ſuch he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliſs,
Whoſe pow'r is ſuch, that whom ſhe lifts from earth

She makes familiar with a heav'n unſeen,
And ſhows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not ſlothful he, though ſeeming unemploy'd,
And cenſur'd oft as uſeleſs. Stilleſt ſtreams
Oft water faireſt meadows, and the bird
That flutters leaſt is longeſt on the wing.
Aſk him, indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purpoſes, and he ſhall anſwer—None.
His warfare is within. There unfatigu'd
His fervent ſpirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains freſh triumphs o'er himſelf,
And never with'ring wreaths, compar'd with whi
The laurels that a Cæſar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the ſelf-approving haughty world,
That as ſhe ſweeps him with her whiſtling ſilks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if ſhe ſee,
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiſeleſs hours,
Of which ſhe little dreams. Perhaps ſhe owes
Her ſunſhine and her rain, her blooming ſpring
And plenteous harveſt, to the pray'r he makes,
When, Iſaac like, the ſolitary ſaint
Walks forth to meditate at even-tide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herſelf.
Forgive him, then, thou buſtler in concerns

Of little worth, an idler in the beſt,
If, author of no miſchief and ſome good,
He ſeek his proper happineſs by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.
Nor, though he tread the ſecret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much eaſe,
Account him an incumbrance on the ſtate,
Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none.
His ſphere though humble, if that humble ſphere
Shine with his fair example, and though ſmall
His influence, if that influence all be ſpent
In ſoothing ſorrow and in quenching ſtrife,
In aiding helpleſs indigence, in works
From which at leaſt a grateful few derive
Some taſte of comfort in a world of wo,
Then let the ſupercilious great confeſs
He ſerves his country, recompenſes well
The ſtate, beneath the ſhadow of whoſe vine
He ſits ſecure, and in the ſcale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a ſlighted, place.
The man, whoſe virtues are more felt than ſeen,
Muſt drop indeed the hope of public praiſe;
But he may boaſt what few that win it can—
That, if his country ſtand not by his ſkill,
At leaſt his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite refinement offers him in vain

Her golden tube, through which a ſenſual world
Draws groſs impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all th' offence.
Not that he peeviſhly rejects a mode
Becauſe that world adopts it. If it bear
The ſtamp and clear impreſſion of good ſenſe,
And be not coſtly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and, for decorum ſake,
Can wear it e'en as gracefully as ſhe.
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the teſt of conſcience, and a heart
Not ſoon deceiv'd; aware that what is baſe
No poliſh can make ſterling; and that vice,
Though well perfum'd and elegantly dreſs'd,
Like an unburied carcaſe trick'd with flow'rs,
Is but a garniſh'd nuiſance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
So life glides ſmoothly and by ſtealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient ſong; not vex'd with care
Or ſtain'd with guilt, beneficent, approv'd
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away! and ſo at laſt,
My ſhare of duties decently fulfill'd,
May ſome diſeaſe, not tardy to perform
Its deſtin'd office, yet with gentle ſtroke,

Diſmiſs me, weary, to a ſafe retreat
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It ſhall not grieve me then, that once, when call'd
To dreſs a Sofa with the flow'rs of verſe,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light taſk; but ſoon, to pleaſe her more,
Whom flow'rs alone I knew would little pleaſe,
Let fall th' unfiniſh'd wreath, and rov'd for fruit;
Rov'd far, and gather'd much: ſome harſh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholeſome, well-digeſted; grateful ſome
To palates that can taſte immortal truth;
Inſipid elſe, and ſure to be deſpis'd.
But all is in his hand whoſe praiſe I ſeek.
In vain the poet ſings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful meaſures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minſtrel's lyre,
To charm his ear, whoſe eye is on the heart;
Whoſe frown can diſappoint the proudeſt ſtrain,
Whoſe approbation—proſper even mine.



AN

EPISTLE

TO

JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

DEAR JOSEPH—five and twenty years ago—
Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
The tedious hour—and now we never meet!
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:

And, were I call'd to prove th' aſſertion true,
One proof ſhould ſerve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurr'd to kindle ſtrife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though num'rous once, reduc'd to few or none?
Can gold grow worthleſs that has ſtood the touch?
No—gold they ſeem'd, but they were never ſuch.

Horatio's ſervant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlour-door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overaw'd
Leſt he ſhould treſpaſs, begg'd to go abroad.
Go, fellow!—whither?—turning ſhort about—
Nay—ſtay at home—you're always going out.
'Tis but a ſtep, ſir, juſt at the ſtreet's end.—
For what?—An pleaſe you, ſir, to ſee a friend.
A friend! Horatio cried, and ſeem'd to ſtart—
Yea marry ſhalt thou, and with all my heart.—
And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
I'll ſee him too—the firſt I ever ſaw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;

But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
Perhaps, his confidence just then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good-humour gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But, not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments, verbosely spun)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time an emp'ror, a wise man—
No matter where, in China or Japan—
Decreed that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.

Oh, happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law like that which I relate
Once have the sanction of our triple state,

Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run moſt dreadful riſk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind ſhould blow,
Might traverſe England ſafely to and fro,
An honeſt man, cloſe-button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

TIROCINIUM:

OR,

REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.

PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.

DIOG. LAERT.

TO THE

Rev. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,

THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,

THE FOLLOWING

P O E M,

RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION

IN PREFERENCE TO

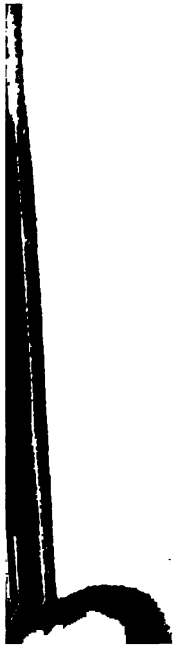
AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

WILLIAM COWPER.

Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.



TIROCINIUM.

It is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the maſter of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form, indeed, th' aſſociate of a mind
Vaſt in its pow'rs, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labour of almighty ſkill,
Fram'd for the ſervice of a free-born will,
Aſſerts precedence, and beſpeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the ſoul.
Here is the ſtate, the ſplendour, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her the mem'ry fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from ev'ry diſtant age;

For her amaſſes an unbounded ſtore,
The wiſdom of great nations, now no more:
Though laden, not incumber'd with her ſpoil;
Laborious, yet unconſcious of her toil;
When copiouſly ſupplied, then moſt enlarg'd;
Still to be fed, and not to be ſurcharg'd.
For her the fancy, roving unconfin'd,
The preſent muſe of ev'ry penſive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To nature's ſcenes than nature ever knew.
At her command winds riſe and waters roar,
Again ſhe lays them ſlumb'ring on the ſhore;
With flow'r and fruit the wilderneſs ſupplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp ariſe.
For her the judgment, umpire in the ſtrife
That grace and nature have to wage through life,
Quick-ſighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed ſage preceptor to the will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the deciſion of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair ſun and his attendant earth?
And, when deſcending he reſigns the ſkies,
Why takes the gentler moon her turn to riſe,

Whom ocean feels through all his countleſs waves,
And owns her pow'r on ev'ry ſhore he laves?
Why do the ſeaſons ſtill enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their firſt career?
Spring hangs her infant bloſſoms on the trees,
Rock'd in the cradle of the weſtern breeze;
Summer in haſte the thriving charge receives
Beneath the ſhade of her expanded leaves,
'Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at laſt in all their glowing hues.—
'Twere wild profuſion all, and bootleſs waſte,
Pow'r miſemploy'd, munificence miſplac'd,
Had not its author dignified the plan,
And crown'd it with the majeſty of man.
Thus form'd, thus plac'd, intelligent, and taught,
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildeſt ſcorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a ſober moment time to pauſe,
To preſs th' important queſtion on his heart,
"Why form'd at all, and wherefore art thou art?"
If man be what he ſeems—this hour a ſlave,
The next mere duſt and aſhes in the grave;
Endu'd with reaſon only to deſcry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
With paſſions, juſt that he may prove, with pain,
The force he ſpends againſt their fury vain;

And if, ſoon after having burnt, by turns,
With ev'ry luſt with which frail nature burns,
His being end where death diſſolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond—
Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,
Stands ſelf-impeach'd the creature of leaſt worth,
And, uſeleſs while he lives, and when he dies,
Beings into doubt the wiſdom of the ſkies.

Truths that the learn'd purſue with eager thought
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at laſt, though told in pompous ſtrains,
A childiſh waſte of philoſophic pains;
But truths on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our ſhame and mis'ry not to learn,
Shine by the ſide of ev'ry path we tread
With ſuch a luſtre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true that, if to trifle life away
Down to the ſun-ſet of the lateſt day,
Then periſh on futurity's wide ſhore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
Were all that Heav'n requir'd of human kind,
And all the plan their deſtiny deſign'd,
What none could rev'rence all might juſtly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's ſhame.

But reaſon heard, and nature well perus'd,
At once the dreaming mind is diſabus'd.
If all we find poſſeſſing earth, ſea, air,
Reflect his attributes who plac'd them there,
Fulfil the purpoſe, and appear deſign'd
Proofs of the wiſdom of th' all-ſeeing mind,
'Tis plain the creature, whom he choſe t' inveſt
With kingſhip and dominion o'er the reſt,
Receiv'd his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the pow'r in which he ſtands array'd,
That firſt or laſt, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his author's wiſdom clear,
Praiſe him on earth, or, obſtinately dumb,
Suffer his juſtice in a world to come.
This once believ'd, 'twere logic miſapplied
To prove a conſequence by none denied,
That we are bound to caſt the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heav'nly truth,
That, taught of God, they may indeed be wiſe,
Nor, ignorantly wand'ring, miſs the ſkies.

In early days the conſcience has in moſt
A quickneſs, which in later life is loſt:
Preſerv'd from guilt by ſalutary fears,
Or, guilty, ſoon relenting into tears.
Too careleſs often, as our years proceed,
What friends we ſort with, or what books we read,

Our parents yet exert a prudent care
To feed our infant minds with proper fare;
And wiſely ſtore the nurs'ry by degrees
With wholeſome learning, yet acquir'd with eaſe
Neatly ſecur'd from being ſoil'd or torn
Beneath a pane of thin tranſlucent horn,
A book (to pleaſe us at a tender age
'Tis call'd a book, though but a ſingle page)
Preſents the pray'r the Saviour deign'd to teach,
Which children uſe, and parſons—when they pr
Liſping our ſyllables, we ſcramble next
Through moral narrative, or ſacred text;
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marr'd, and who has ranſom'd
Points which, unleſs the ſcripture made them p
The wiſeſt heads might agitate in vain.
O thou, whom, born on fancy's eager wing
Back to the ſeaſon of life's happy ſpring,
I pleas'd remember, and, while mem'ry yet
Holds faſt her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whoſe well-told tale
Sweet fiction and ſweet truth alike prevail;
Whoſe hum'rous vein, ſtrong ſenſe, and ſimple
May teach the gayeſt, make the graveſt ſmile;
Witty, and well employ'd, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his ſlighted word;

I name thee not, leſt ſo deſpis'd a name
Should move a ſneer at thy deſerved fame;
Yet ev'n in tranſitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with ſober gray,
Revere the man, whoſe PILGRIM marks the road,
And guides the PROGRESS of the ſoul to God.
'Twere well with moſt, if books, that could engage
Their childhood, pleas'd them at a riper age;
The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,
Would die at laſt in comfort, peace, and joy;
And not with curſes on his art, who ſtole
The gem of truth from his unguarded ſoul.
The ſtamp of artleſs piety impreſs'd
By kind tuition on his yielding breaſt,
The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with ſcorn, though once receiv'd with awe;
And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,
That babblers, call'd philoſophers, deviſe,
Blaſphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Aſſert the native evil of his heart,
His pride reſents the charge, although the proof *
Riſe in his forehead, and ſeem rank enough;

* See 2 Chron. ch. xxvi. ver. 19.

Point to the cure, deſcribe a Saviour's croſs
As God's expedient to retrieve his loſs,
The young apoſtate ſickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves,
Oppos'd againſt the pleaſures nature loves!
While, ſelf-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no ſooner woo'd than won.
Try now the merits of this bleſt exchange
Of modeſt truth for wit's eccentric range.
'Time was he clos'd, as he began, the day
With decent duty, not aſham'd to pray:
The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a conſiſtent part;
Nor could he dare preſumptuouſly diſpleaſe
A pow'r, confeſs'd ſo lately on his knees.
But now farewell all legendary tales—
The ſhadows fly, philoſophy prevails!
Pray'r to the winds, and caution to the waves;
Religion makes the free by nature ſlaves!
Prieſts have invented, and the world admir'd
What knaviſh prieſts promulgate as inſpir'd;
Till reaſon, now no longer overaw'd,
Reſumes her pow'rs, and ſpurns the clumſy fraud;

amon-ſenſe diffuſing real day,
or of the goſpel dies away!
ſodies our ſhrewd diſcerning youth
m expert inquirers after truth;
ily care, might truth preſume to ſpeak,
find what they profeſs to ſeek.
, well-tutor'd only while we ſhare
's lectures and a nurſe's care;
ht at ſchools much mythologic ſtuff*,
l religion ſparingly enough;
notices of truth, diſgrac'd,
their credit, and are all effac'd.

you your ſon ſhould be a ſot or dunce,
s, headſtrong; or all theſe at once;
good time, the ſtripling's finiſh'd taſte
expenſe and faſhionable waſte
ove your ruin and his own at laſt;
n in public with a mob of boys,
in miſchief only and in noiſe,

* uthor begs leave to explain.—Senſible that, without dge, neither the ancient poets nor hiſtorians can be deed underſtood, he does not mean to cenſure the pains en to inſtruct a ſchool-boy in the religion of the hea- nerely that neglect of Chriſtian culture which leaves ully ignorant of his own.

Elſe of a manniſh growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdneſs men.
There ſhall he learn, ere ſixteen winters old,
That authors are moſt uſeful pawn'd or ſold;
That pedantry is all that ſchools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;
There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,
Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praiſe,
His counſellor and boſom-friend ſhall prove,
And ſome ſtreet-pacing harlot his firſt love.
Schools, unleſs diſcipline were doubly ſtrong,
Detain their adoleſcent charge too long;
The management of tiros of eighteen
Is difficult, their puniſhment obſcene.
The ſtout tall captain, whoſe ſuperior ſize
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride, that ſcorns t' obey or to ſubmit,
With them is courage; his effront'ry wit.
His wild excurſions, window-breaking feats,
Robb'ry of gardens, quarrels in the ſtreets,
His hair-breadth 'ſcapes, and all his daring ſchemes,
Tranſport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.
In little boſoms ſuch achievements ſtrike
A kindred ſpark; they burn to do the like.

Thus, half-accompliſh'd ere he yet begin
To ſhow the peeping down upon his chin;
And, as maturity of years comes on,
Made juſt th' adept that you deſign'd your ſon;
T' enſure the perſeverance of his courſe,
And give your monſtrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tam'd,
Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,
Where no regard of ord'nances is ſhown
Or look'd for now, the fault muſt be his own.
Some ſneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
Where neither ſtrumpets' charms, nor drinking-bout
Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
Such youths of ſpirit, and that ſpirit too,
Ye nurs'ries of our boys, we owe to you!
Though from ourſelves the miſchief more proceeds,
For public ſchools 'tis public folly feeds.
The ſlaves of cuſtom and eſtabliſh'd mode,
With pack-horſe conſtancy we keep the road,
Crooked or ſtraight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leaders bells.
To follow fooliſh precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is eaſier than to think:
And ſuch an age as our's baulks no expenſe,
Except of caution and of common-ſenſe;

Elſe, ſure, notorious fact and proof ſo plain
Would turn our ſteps into a wiſer train.
I blame not thoſe who with what care they can
O'erwatch the num'rous and unruly clan;
Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promiſe a work of which they muſt deſpair.
Have ye, ye ſage intendants of the whole,
An ubiquarian preſence and controul—
Eliſha's eye, that when Gehazi ſtray'd,
Went with him, and ſaw all the game he play'd?
Yes—ye are conſcious; and on all the ſhelves
Your pupils ſtrike upon have ſtruck yourſelves.
Or, if by nature ſober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men;
Ye knew at leaſt, by conſtant proofs addreſs'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the reſt.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils, not to be endur'd, endure,
Leſt pow'r exerted, but without ſucceſs,
Should make the little ye retain ſtill leſs.
Ye once were juſtly fam'd for bringing forth
Undoubted ſcholarſhip and genuine worth;
And in the firmament of fame ſtill ſhines
A glory, bright as that of all the ſigns,
Of poets rais'd by you, and ſtateſmen, and divines.

Peace to them all! thoſe brilliant times are fled,
And no ſuch lights are kindling in their ſtead.
Our ſtriplings ſhine, indeed, but with ſuch rays
As ſet the midnight riot in a blaze;
And ſeem, if judg'd by their expreſſive looks,
Deeper in none than in their ſurgeons' books.

Say, muſe, (for education made the ſong,
No muſe can heſitate or linger long)
What cauſes move us, knowing as we muſt,
That theſe *menageries* all fail their truſt,
To ſend our ſons to ſcout and ſcamper there,
While colts and puppies coſt us ſo much care?

Be it a weakneſs, it deſerves ſome praiſe;
We love the play-place of our early days—
The ſcene is touching, and the heart is ſtone
That feels not at that ſight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving ſkill,
The very name we carv'd ſubſiſting ſtill;
The bench on which we ſat while deep employ'd,
Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet deſtroy'd:
The little ones, unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very ſpot;
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;

To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dext'rous pat—
The pleaſing ſpectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we ſeem almoſt t' obtain
Our innocent ſweet ſimple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence firſt we ſtarted into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with ſuch unfailing ſway,
We feel it ev'n in age, and at our lateſt day.
Hark! how the ſire of chits, whoſe future ſhare
Of claſſic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeneſs plac'd on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee;
And tells them, as he ſtrokes their ſilver locks
That they muſt ſoon learn Latin, and to box;
Then, turning, he regales his liſt'ning wife
With all th' adventures of his early life;
His ſkill in coachmanſhip, or driving chaiſe,
In bilking tavern bills, and ſpouting plays;
What ſhifts he us'd, detected in a ſcrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck t' eſcape
What ſums he loſt at play, and how he ſold
Watch, ſeals, and all—till all his pranks are
Retracing thus his *frolics*, ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of ſhame)

He gives the local bias all its ſway;
Reſolves that where he play'd his ſons ſhall play,
And deſtines their bright genius to be ſhown
Juſt in the ſcene where he diſplay'd his own.
The meek and baſhful boy will ſoon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
The rude will ſcuffle through with eaſe enough,
Great ſchools ſuit beſt the ſturdy and the rough.
Ah, happy deſignation, prudent choice,
Th' event is ſure; expect it, and rejoice!
Soon ſee your wiſh fulfill'd in either child—
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excus'd th' incumbrance of more ſolid worth,
Are beſt diſpos'd of where with moſt ſucceſs
They may acquire that confident addreſs,
Thoſe habits of profuſe and lewd expenſe,
That ſcorn of all delights but thoſe of ſenſe,
Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With ſo much reaſon all expect from them.
But families of leſs illuſtrious fame,
Whoſe chief diſtinction is their ſpotleſs name,
Whoſe heirs, their honours none, their income ſmall,
Muſt ſhine by true deſert, or not at all—

What dream they of, that with ſo little care
They riſk their hopes, their deareſt treaſure, there
They dream of little Charles or William grac'd
With wig prolix, down flowing to his waiſt;
They ſee th' attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him ſpeak—the oracle of law!
The father who deſigns his babe a prieſt,
Dreams him epiſcopally ſuch at leaſt;
And, while the playful jockey ſcours the room
Briſkly, aſtride upon the parlour broom,
In fancy ſees him more ſuperbly ride
In coach with purple lin'd, and mitres on its ſide
Events improbable and ſtrange as theſe,
Which only a parental eye foreſees,
A public ſchool ſhall bring to paſs with eaſe.
But how? reſides ſuch virtue in that air
As muſt create an appetite for pray'r?
And will it breathe into him all the zeal
That candidates for ſuch a prize ſhould feel,
To take the lead and be the foremoſt ſtill
In all true worth and literary ſkill?
"Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught
"The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought
"Church-ladders are not always mounted beſt
"By learned clerks and Latiniſts profeſs'd.

" Th' exalted prize demands an upward look,
" Not to be found by poring on a book.
" Small ſkill in Latin, and ſtill leſs in Greek,
" Is more than adequate to all I ſeek.
" Let erudition grace him or not grace,
" I give the bauble but the ſecond place;
" His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
" Subſiſt and centre in one point—a friend!
" A friend, whate'er he ſtudies or neglects,
" Shall give him conſequence, heal all defects.
" His intercourſe with peers, and ſons of peers—
" There dawns the ſplendour of his future years;
" In that bright quarter his propitious ſkies
" Shall bluſh betimes, and there his glory riſe.
" *Your Lordſhip*, and *Your Grace!* what ſchool can teach
" A rhet'ric equal to thoſe parts of ſpeech?
" What need of Homer's verſe or Tully's proſe,
" Sweet interjections! if he learn but thoſe?
" Let rev'rend churls his ignorance rebuke,
" Who ſtarve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,
" The parſon knows enough who knows a duke."—
Egregious purpoſe! worthily begun
In barb'rous proſtitution of your ſon;
Preſs'd on *his* part by means that would diſgrace
A ſcriv'ner's clerk or footman out of place,

And ending, if at laſt its end be gain'd,
In ſacrilege, in God's own houſe profan'
It may ſucceed; and, if his ſins ſhould c
For more than common puniſhment, it ſ
The wretch ſhall riſe, and be the thing c
Leaſt qualified in honour, learning, wort
To occupy a ſacred, awful poſt,
In which the beſt and worthieſt tremble
The *royal letters* are a thing of courſe—
A king, that would, might recommend
And deans, no doubt, and chapters, wit
As bound in duty, would confirm the ch
Behold your biſhop! well he plays his pa
Chriſtian in name, and infidel in heart,
Ghoſtly in office, earthly in his plan,
A ſlave at court, elſewhere a lady's man
Dumb as a ſenator, and, as a prieſt,
A piece of mere church-furniture at beſt
To live eſtrang'd from God his total ſco
And his end ſure, without one glimpſe o
But, fair although and feaſible it ſeem,
Depend not much upon your golden drea
For providence, that ſeems concern'd t'
The hallow'd bench from abſolute conte
In ſpite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a ſeat or two for worth and g

And therefore 'tis, that, though the ſight be rare,
We ſometimes ſee a Lowth or Bagot there.
Beſides, ſchool-friendſhips are not always found,
Though fair in promiſe, permanent and ſound;
The moſt diſint'reſted and virtuous minds,
In early years connected, time unbinds;
New ſituations give a diff'rent caſt
Of habit, inclination, temper, taſte;
And he, that ſeem'd our counterpart at firſt,
Soon ſhows the ſtrong ſimilitude revers'd.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make miſtakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at beſt but pretty buds unblown,
Whoſe ſcent and hues are rather gueſs'd than known;
Each dreams that each is juſt what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When diſpoſition, like a ſail unfurl'd,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If, therefore, ev'n when honeſt in deſign,
A boyiſh friendſhip may ſo ſoon decline,
'Twere wiſer ſure t' inſpire a little heart
With juſt abhorrence of ſo mean a part,
Than ſet your ſon to work at a vile trade
For wages ſo unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile reſort,
That are of chief and moſt approv'd report,

Owe th[illegible]
A principle, whose [illegible]
Unqueſtion'd, though the jeſu[illegible]
That with a world, not often over-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;
Or rather a groſs compound, juſtly tried—
Of envy, hatred, jealouſy, and pride—
Contributes moſt perhaps t' enhance their fame;
An emulation is its ſpecious name.
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in their's the ſcholar's priz
The ſpirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns;
Each vainly magnifies his own ſucceſs,
Reſents his fellow's, wiſhes it were leſs,
[illegible] his miſcarriage if he fail,
[illegible] great if he prevail
[illegible] and ni

But judge, where ſo much evil intervenes,
The end, though plauſible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, claſſical deſert
Againſt an heart deprav'd and temper hurt;
Hurt, too, perhaps for life; for early wrong,
Done to the nobler part, affects it long;
And you are ſtaunch indeed in learning's cauſe,
If you can crown a diſcipline, that draws
Such miſchief after it, with much applauſe.

Connexion form'd for int'reſt, and endear'd
By ſelfiſh views, thus cenſur'd and caſhier'd;
And emulation, as engend'ring hate,
Doom'd to a no leſs ignominious fate;
The props of ſuch proud ſeminaries fall,
The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.
Great ſchools rejected, then, as thoſe that ſwell
Beyond a ſize that can be manag'd well,
Shall royal inſtitutions miſs the bays,
And ſmall academies win all the praiſe?
Force not my drift beyond its juſt intent,
I praiſe a ſchool as Pope a government;
So take my judgment in his language dreſs'd—
"Whate'er is beſt adminiſter'd is beſt."
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well;

Then aſk not, Whether limited or large?
But, watch they ſtrictly, or neglect their charge?
If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
While *morals* languiſh, a deſpis'd concern,
The great and ſmall deſerve one common blame,
Diff'rent in ſize, but in effect the ſame.
Much zeal in virtue's cauſe all teachers boaſt,
Though motives of mere lucre ſway the moſt;
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there the game they ſeek is eaſieſt found;
Though there, in ſpite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are moſt abundant too.
If ſhrewd, and of a well-conſtructed brain,
Keen in purſuit, and vig'rous to retain,
Your ſon come forth a prodigy of ſkill;
As, whereſoever taught, ſo form'd, he will;
The pedagogue, with ſelf-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praiſe as his due ſhare.
But, if, with all his genius, he betray,
Not more intelligent than looſe and gay,
Such vicious habits as diſgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;
Though want of due reſtraint alone have bred
The ſymptoms that you ſee with ſo much dread;
Unenvy'd there, he may ſuſtain alone
The whole reproach—the fault was all his own!

Oh 'tis a ſight to be with joy perus'd,
By all whom ſentiment has not abus'd;
New-fangled ſentiment, the boaſted grace
Of thoſe who never feel in the right place;
A ſight ſurpaſs'd by none that we can ſhow,
Though Veſtris on one leg ſtill ſhine below;
A father bleſt with an ingenuous ſon—
Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
How!—turn again to tales long ſince forgot,
Æſop, and Phædrus, and the reſt?—Why not?
He will not bluſh that has a father's heart,
To take in childiſh plays a childiſh part;
But bends his ſturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleaſure in, to pleaſe his boy:
Then why reſign into a ſtranger's hand
A taſk as much within your own command,
That God and nature, and your int'reſt too,
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a houſe unknown
For one whoſe tend'reſt thoughts all hover round your own?
This ſecond weaning, needleſs as it is,
How does it lac'rate both your heart and his!
Th' indented ſtick, that loſes day by day
Notch after notch, till all are ſmooth'd away,
Bears witneſs, long ere his diſmiſſion come,
With what intenſe deſire he wants his home.

But, though the joys he hopes beneath your roo
Bid fair enough to anſwer in the proof,
Harmleſs, and ſafe, and nat'ral, as they are,
A diſappointment waits him even there:
Arriv'd, he feels an unexpected change;
He bluſhes, hangs his head, is ſhy and ſtrange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearleſs eaſe,
His fav'rite ſtand between his father's knees,
But ſeeks the corner of ſome diſtant ſeat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And, leaſt familiar where he ſhould be moſt,
Feels all his happieſt privileges loſt.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by abſence chill'd into reſpect.
[illegible] accompliſhments, at ſchool acquir'd,
Brings he, to ſweeten fruits ſo undeſir'd?
Thou well deſerv'ſt an alienated ſon,
Unleſs thy conſcious heart acknowledge—none;
None that, in thy domeſtic ſnug receſs,
He had not made his own with more addreſs,
Though ſome perhaps that ſhock thy feeling mi
And better never learn'd, or left behind.
Add too, that, thus eſtrang'd, thou can'ſt obta
By no kind arts his confidence again;
That here begins with moſt that long complaint
[illegible]ial frankneſs loſt, and love grown faint,

Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
A parent pours into regardless ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred th' unseemly race;
While ev'ry worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So num'rous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy;
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
Th' encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage;
Ev'n in his pastimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions, and control their tide;
And, levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,

T' impreſs a value, not to be eras'd,
On moments ſquander'd elſe, and running all to waſte
And ſeems it nothing in a father's eye
That unimprov'd thoſe many moments fly?
And is he well content his ſon ſhould find
No nouriſhment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs and nouns declin'd!
For ſuch is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hacknies in the ſchooling trade;
Who feed a pupil's intellect with ſtore
Of ſyntax, truly, but with little more;
Diſmiſs their cares when they diſmiſs their flock—
Machines themſelves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father, bleſt with any brains,
Would deem it no abuſe, or waſte of pains,
T' improve this diet, at no great expenſe,
With ſav'ry truth and wholeſome common ſenſe;
To lead his ſon, for proſpects of delight,
To ſome not ſteep, though philoſophic, height,
Thence to exhibit to his wond'ring eyes
Yon circling worlds, their diſtance, and their ſize,
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To ſhow him, in an inſect or a flow'r,
Such microſcopic proof of ſkill and pow'r,

As, hid from ages paſt, God now diſplays
To combat atheiſts with in modern days;
To ſpread the earth before him, and commend,
With deſignation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the moſt remote;
To teach his heart to glow with gen'rous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame;
And, more than all, with commendation due
To ſet ſome living worthy in his view,
Whoſe fair example may at once inſpire
A wiſh to copy what he muſt admire.
Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears,
Though ſolid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itſelf, and not forbidding ſport,
When health demands it, of athletic ſort,
Would make him—what ſome lovely boys have been,
And more than one, perhaps, that I have ſeen—
An evidence and reprehenſion both
Of the mere ſchool-boy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man profeſſionally tied,
With all thy faculties elſewhere applied,
Too buſy to intend a meaner care
Than how t' enrich thyſelf, and next thine heir;

Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none t' impart;—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad;
His ſprightly mingled with a ſhade of ſad;
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men;
No jeſter, and yet lively in diſcourſe,
His phraſe well choſen, clear and full of force;
And his addreſs, if not quite French in eaſe,
Not Engliſh ſtiff, but frank, and form'd to pleaſe
Low in the world, becauſe he ſcorns its arts;
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;
Unpatroniz'd, and therefore little known;
Wiſe for himſelf and his few friends alone—
In him the well-appointed proxy ſee,
Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee;
Prepar'd by taſte, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy ſon, to ſtrike his genius forth;
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
The force of diſcipline when back'd by love;
To double all thy pleaſure in thy child,
His mind inform'd, his morals undefil'd.
Safe under ſuch a wing, the boy ſhall ſhow
No ſpots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his ſpeech with meanneſſes, deſign'd
By footman Tom for witty and refin'd.

There, in his commerce with his liv'ried herd,
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd;
For, ſince (ſo faſhion dictates) all, who claim
An higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what miſchief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
(And they that can afford th' expenſe of more,
Some half a dozen, and ſome half a ſcore)
Great cauſe occurs to ſave him from a band
So ſure to ſpoil him, and ſo near at hand;
A point ſecur'd, if once he be ſupplied
With ſome ſuch Mentor always at his ſide.
Are ſuch men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation eaſier to be found,
Were education, elſe ſo ſure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable ſcale,
And ſchools that have out-liv'd all juſt eſteem,
Exchang'd for the ſecure domeſtic ſcheme.—
But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou haſt ſenſe enough to prize the pearl,
And, as thou wouldſt th' advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Reſpect, as is but rational and juſt,
A man deem'd worthy of ſo dear a truſt.
Deſpis'd by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly than the ſame neglect?

A flat and fatal negative obtains,
That inſtant, upon all his future pains;
His leſſons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all th' inſtructions of thy ſon's beſt friend
Are a ſtream choak'd, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to ſolitary meals;
But recollect that he has ſenſe, and feels;
And that, poſſeſſor of a ſoul refin'd,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
His poſt not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And, if admitted at thy board he ſit,
Account him no juſt mark for idle wit;
Offend not him, whom modeſty reſtrains
From repartee, with jokes that he diſdains;
Much leſs transfix his feelings with an oath;
Nor frown, unleſs he vaniſh with the cloth.—
And, truſt me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hir'd or bound to teach;
Much traſh unutter'd, and ſome ills undone,
Through rev'rence of the cenſor of thy ſon.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with exceſs, and with diſcourſe obſcene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan
The world accounts an honourable man,

forſooth thy courage has been tried
od the teſt, perhaps on the wrong ſide;
i thou hadſt never grace enough to prove
ıy thing but vice could win thy love;—
thou a polite, card-playing wife,
to the routs that ſhe frequents for life;
ıſt when induſtry begins to ſnore,
ring'd with joy, to ſome coach-crowded door;
:ice in ev'ry winter throngs thine own
alf the chariots and ſedans in town,
meanwhile e'en ſhifting as thou may'ſt;
y ſober though, not very chaſte;—
ıine houſe, though leſs ſuperb thy rank,
ſcene of pleaſure, a mere blank,
ɔu at beſt, and in thy ſob'reſt mood,
r vain, and empty of all good;—
ı mercy for thyſelf thou canſt have none,
ıtuſe plead, ſhow mercy to thy ſon.
·om his home, where ev'ry day brings forth
ıiſchief fatal to his future worth,
m a better in a diſtant ſpot,
ſome pious paſtor's humble cot,
vile example (your's I chiefly mean,
ɔſt ſeducing and the oft'neſt ſeen)
:ver more be ſtamp'd upon his breaſt,
: perhaps incurably impreſs'd:—

Where early reſt makes early riſing ſure,
Diſeaſe or comes not, or finds eaſy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain;
Or, if it enter, ſoon ſtarv'd out again:—
Where all th' attention of his faithful hoſt,
Diſcreetly limited to two at moſt,
May raiſe ſuch fruits as ſhall reward his care,
And not at laſt evaporate in air:—
Where, ſtillneſs aiding ſtudy, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclin'd,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleaſures paſt, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at laſt
In ſettled habit and decided taſte.—
But whom do I adviſe? the faſhion-led,
Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead!
Whom care and cool deliberation ſuit
Not better much than ſpectacles a brute;
Who, if their ſons ſome ſlight tuition ſhare,
Deem it of no great moment whoſe, or where;
Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay t' have any of their own.
But, courage, man! methought the muſe replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide:
The oſtrich, ſillieſt of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,

s her eggs, incautious, to the duſt,
l that the foot may cruſh the truſt;
ıile on public nurs'ries they rely,
ıwing, and too oft not caring, why,
al in what they thus prefer,
. that would ſeem wiſe, reſemble her.
are not alike. Thy warning voice
re and there prevent erroneous choice;
ne perhaps, who, buſy as they are,
ce their progeny their deareſt care,
hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
Fspring, left upon ſo wild a beach)
ed no ſtreſs of argument t' enforce
edience of a leſs advent'rous courſe:
will ſlight thy counſel, or condemn;
have human feelings—turn to *them*.

ıu, then, tenants of life's middle ſtate,
plac'd between the ſmall and great,
haracter, yet undebauch'd, retains
rds of all the virtue that remains,
iſe yourſelves, deſire your ſons ſhould learn
ſdom and your ways—to you I turn.
ınd you on a world perverſely blind;
contempt is fall'n on human kind;

See wealth abus'd, and dignities miſplac'd,
Great titles, offices, and truſts diſgrac'd,
Long lines of anceſtry, renown'd of old,
Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold;
See Bedlam's cloiſtered and hand-cuff'd charge
Surpaſs'd in frenzy by the mad at large;
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without ſtudy made;
Churchmen, in whoſe eſteem their bleſt employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who, far enough from furniſhing their ſhelves
With goſpel lore, turn infidels themſelves;
See womanhood deſpis'd, and manhood ſham'd
With infamy too nauſeous to be nam'd,
Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,
Civetted fellows, ſmelt ere they are ſeen,
Elſe coarſe and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curſes, and with nonſenſe hung,
Now fluſh'd with drunk'neſs, now with whoredom
Their breath a ſample of laſt night's regale;
See volunteers in all the vileſt arts,
Men well endow'd, of honourable parts,
Deſign'd by nature wiſe, but ſelf-made fools;—
All theſe, and more like theſe, were bred at ſcho
And, if it chance, as ſometimes chance it will,
That, though ſchool-bred, the boy be virtuous ſti

:ceptions, ſhining in the dark,
:r than impeach, the juſt remark:
there a twinkling ſtar deſcried
› ſhow how black is all beſide.
n him, whoſe very voice in tone
thine, whoſe features are thine own,
his poliſh'd cheek of pureſt red,
ıe hand upon his flaxen head,
ſy boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,
tranſplanted from thy genial home,
colder ſoil and bleaker air,
›r ſafety to a ſtranger's care;
ter, what turn thou wilt aſſume
nt converſe with I know not whom;
will court thy friendſhip, with what views,
; as thou art, whom thou wilt chooſe;
ch depends on what thy choice ſhall be,
medley, and unknown to me.—
the tear juſt trembling on thy lids,
he dreadful riſque foreſeen forbids;
nd under no conſtraining force,
way of cuſtom warp thy courſe;
take upon the loſing ſide,
atify ſo blind a guide?
not! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
h' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.

Thou would'ſt not, deaf to Nature's tend'reſt plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling ſea,
Nor ſay, *Go thither*, conſcious that there lay
A brood of aſps, or quickſands in his way;
Then, only govern'd by the ſelf-ſame rule
Of nat'ral pity, ſend him not to ſchool.
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyſelf in miniature, thy fleſh, thy bone?
And hop'ſt thou not ('tis ev'ry father's hope)
That, ſince thy ſtrength muſt with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need ſome comfort to aſſuage
Health's laſt farewell, a ſtaff of thine old age,
That then, in recompenſe of all thy cares,
Thy child ſhall ſhow reſpect to thy gray hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compaſs that good end, forecaſt the means.
His heart, now paſſive, yields to thy command;—
Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.
If thou deſert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what gueſts there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and baſe
Supplant thee in it, and uſurp thy place.
But, if thou guard its ſacred chambers ſure
From vicious inmates and delights impure,

Either his gratitude ſhall hold him faſt,
And keep him warm and filia lto the laſt;
Or, if he prove unkind (as who can ſay
But, being man, and therefore frail, he may?)
One comfort yet ſhall cheer thine aged heart—
Howe'er he ſlight thee, thou haſt done thy part.

Oh barb'rous! would'ſt thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the ſchools—what!—all the ſchools i' th' land;
Or throw them up to liv'ry-nags and grooms,
Or turn them into ſhops and auction rooms?
A captious queſtion, ſir, (and your's is one)
Deſerves an anſwer ſimilar, or none.
Would'ſt thou, poſſeſſor of a flock, employ
(Appriz'd that he is ſuch) a careleſs boy,
And feed him well, and give him handſome pay,
Merely to ſleep, and let them run aſtray?
Survey our ſchools and colleges, and ſee
A ſight not much unlike my ſimile.
From education, as the leading cauſe,
The public character its colour draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their caſt,
Extravagant or ſober, looſe or chaſte.
And, though I would not advertiſe them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let*,

Unleſs the world were all prepar'd t' embrace
A plan well worthy to ſupply their place;
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wiſh them, I confeſs,
Or better manag'd, or encourag'd leſs.

ON

THE DEATH

OF

Mrs. THROCKMORTON's BULFINCH.

Ye nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapleſs fav'rites ſhed,
O ſhare Maria's grief!
Her fav'rite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Aſſaſſin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus ſtrays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he ſprung,
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whiſtle bleſt,
Well-taught he all the ſounds expreſs'd
Of flageiet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the ſleekeſt mole,
His boſom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the ſkies,
When piping winds ſhall ſoon ariſe
To ſweep up all the dew.

THE ROSE.

THE roſe had been waſh'd, juſt waſh'd in a ſhowe
Which Mary to Anna convey'd,
The plentiful moiſture incumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet
And it ſeem'd to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret,
On the flouriſhing buſh where it grew.

I haſtily ſeiz'd it, unfit as it was,
For a noſegay, ſo dripping and drown'd,
And ſwinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I ſnapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And ſuch, I exclaim'd, is the pitileſs part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardleſs of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to ſorrow reſign'd.

This elegant roſe, had I ſhaken it leſs,
Might have bloom'd with its owner a while,
And the tear that is wip'd with a little addreſs,
May be follow'd perhaps by a ſmile.

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

MARIA! I have ev'ry good
For thee wiſh'd many a time,
Both ſad, and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhime.

To wiſh thee fairer is no need,
More prudent, or more ſprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unſightly.

What favour, then, not yet poſſeſs'd,
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already bleſt,
To thy whole heart's deſire?

None here is happy but in part;
Full bliſs is bliſs divine;
There dwells ſome wiſh in ev'ry heart,
And, doubtleſs, one in thine.

That wiſh, on ſome fair future day,
Which fate ſhall brightly gild,
('Tis blameleſs, be it what it may)
I wiſh it all fulfill'd.

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE

PATRON of all thoſe luckleſs brains,
That, to the wrong ſide leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning.

Ah why, ſince oceans, rivers, ſtreams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In conſtant exhalations,

Why, ſtooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, haſt thou ſtol'n away

'd, perhaps, ere ſummer flies,
abin'd with millions more,
m an iris in the ſkies,
ough black and foul before.

rious drop! and happy then
yond the happieſt lot,
ll that ever paſs'd my pen,
ſoon to be forgot!

ebus, if ſuch be thy deſign,
o place it in thy bow,
e wit, that what is left may ſhine
With equal grace below.

CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLET(

She came—ſhe is gone—we have met—
And meet perhaps never again;
The ſun of that moment is ſet,
And ſeems to have riſen in vain.
Catharina has fled like a dream—
(So vaniſhes pleaſure, alas!)
But has left a regret and eſteem
That will not ſo ſuddenly paſs.

The laſt evening ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progreſs was often delay'd
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paus'd under many a tree,
And much ſhe was charm'd with a tone
Leſs ſweet to Maria and me,
Who had witneſs'd ſo lately her own.

My numbers that day ſhe had ſung,
And gave them a grace ſo divine,
As only her muſical tongue
Could infuſe into numbers of mine.

I heard, I eſteem'd
of my fancy the more,
myſelf never ſeem'd
a poet before.

pleaſures of London exceed
the days of the year,
id nothing impede,
l herſelf happier here;
woven arches of limes,
ıks of our river, I know,
o her many times
hat the city can ſhow.

n the mind is endued
ll-judging taſte from above,
ıer embelliſh'd or rude,
: alone that we love.
nents of art may amuſe,
our wonder excite,
ıills, and vallies, diffuſe
a ſacred delight.

the rural receſs
alone can rejoice,
e her lot to poſſeſs
of her ſenſible choice!

To inhabit a manſion remote
From the clatter of ſtreet-pacing ſteeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To meaſure the life that ſhe leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home,
And with ſcenes that new rapture inſpire
As oft as it ſuits her to roam,
She will have juſt the life ſhe prefers,
With little to wiſh or to fear,
And ours will be pleaſant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT (or if 'chance you hold
That title now too trite and old)
A man, once young, who liv'd retired
As hermits could have well deſired,
His hours of ſtudy cloſed at laſt,
And finiſh'd his conciſe repaſt,
Stoppled his cruſe, replac'd his book
Within its cuſtomary nook,
And, ſtaff in hand, ſet forth to ſhare
The ſober cordial of ſweet air,
Like Iſaac, with a mind applied
To ſerious thought at evening-tide.
Autumnal rains had made it chill,
And from the trees that fringed his hill
Shades ſlanting at the cloſe of day
Chill'd more his elſe delightful way.
Diſtant a little mile he ſpied
A weſtern bank's ſtill ſunny ſide,
And right toward the favour'd place
Proceeding with his nimbleſt pace,

In hope to baſk a little yet,
Juſt reach'd it when the ſun was ſet.
  Your hermit, young and jovial ſirs!
Learns ſomething from whate'er occurs—
And hence, he ſaid, my mind computes
The real worth of man's purſuits.
His object choſen, wealth or fame,
Or other ſublunary game,
Imagination to his view
Preſents it deck'd with ev'ry hue
That can ſeduce him not to ſpare
His pow'rs of beſt exertion there,
But youth, health, vigour, to expend
On ſo deſirable an end.
Ere long, approach life's evening ſhades,
The glow that fancy gave it fades;
And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
Which firſt engag'd him in the chaſe.
  True, anſwer'd an angelic guide,
Attendant at the ſenior's ſide—
But whether all the time it coſt
To urge the fruitleſs chaſe be loſt,
Muſt be decided by the worth
Of that which call'd his ardour forth.
Trifles purſu'd, whate'er th' event,
[redacted]uſt cauſe him ſhame or diſcontent;

A vicious object ſtill is worſe,
Succeſsful there, he wins a curſe;
But he, whom ev'n in life's laſt ſtage
Endeavours laudable engage,
Is paid, at leaſt in peace of mind,
And ſenſe of having well deſign'd;
And if, ere he attain his end,
His ſun precipitate deſcend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompenſe his mere intent.
No virtuous wiſh can bear a date
Either too early or too late.

THE FAITHFUL FRIEN

THE green-houſe is my ſummer ſeat;
My ſhrubs diſplac'd from that retreat
Enjoy'd the open air;
Two goldfinches, whoſe ſprightly ſong
Had been their mutual ſolace long,
Liv'd happy pris'ners there.

They ſang, as blithe as finches ſing
That flutter looſe on golden wing,
And frolic where they lift;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And, therefore, never miſs'd.

But nature works in ev'ry breaſt;
Inſtinct is never quite ſuppreſs'd;
And Dick felt ſome deſires,
Which, after many an effort vain,
Inſtructed him at length to gain
[redacted] paſs between his wires.

The open windows ſeem'd to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
But Tom was ſtill confin'd;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too gen'rous and ſincere
To leave his friend behind.

For, ſettling on his grated roof,
He chirp'd and kiſs'd him, giving proof
That he deſir'd no more;
For would forſake his cage at laſt,
Till gently ſeiz'd, I ſhut him faſt,
A pris'ner as before.

Oh ye, who never knew the joys
Of Friendſhip, ſatisfied with noiſe,
Fandango, ball, and rout!
Huſh, when I tell you how a bird,
A priſon, with a friend, preferr'd
To liberty without.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED

A FABLE.

I SHALL not aſk Jean Jacques Rouſſeau *,
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold diſcourſe, at leaſt, in fable;
And ev'n the child, who knows no better,
Than to interpret by the letter,
A ſtory of a cock and bull,
Muſt have a moſt uncommon ſkull.

It chanc'd then, on a winter's day,
But warm and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a deſign
To foreſtal ſweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copſe, and grove,
Aſſembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter and much chatter,
Began to agitate the matter.

* It was one of the whimſical ſpeculations of this philoſop
That all fables which aſcribe reaſon and ſpeech to animals ſh
withheld from children, as being only vehicles of decept
what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, againſt
of his ſenſes!

ngth a Bulfinch, who could boaſt
years and wiſdom than the moſt,
:ated, op'ning wide his beak,
)ment's liberty to ſpeak;
, ſilence publicly enjoin'd,
'er'd briefly thus his mind.
y friends! be cautious how ye treat
ſubject upon which we meet;
r we ſhall have winter yet.
Finch, whoſe tongue knew no control,
ı golden wing and ſatin poll,
ſt year's bird, who ne'er had tried
t marriage means, thus pert replied.
ethinks the gentleman, quoth ſhe,
)ſite in the apple-tree,
is good-will would keep us ſingle
yonder heav'n and earth ſhall mingle,
which is likelier to befall)
death exterminate us all.
rry without more ado,
dear Dick Redcap, what ſay you?
ick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
ning ſhort round, ſtrutting and ſidling,
ſted, glad, his approbation
ın immediate conjugation.

Their ſentiments ſo well expreſs'd,
Influenc'd mightily the reſt,
All pair'd, and each pair built a neſt.
But though the birds were thus in haſte,
The leaves came on not quite ſo faſt,
And deſtiny, that ſometimes bears
An aſpect ſtern on man's affairs,
Not altogether ſmil'd on theirs.
The wind, of late breath'd gently forth,
Now ſhifted eaſt and eaſt by north.
Bare trees and ſhrubs but ill, you know,
Could ſhelter them from rain or ſnow;
Stepping into their neſts, they paddled,
Themſelves were chill'd, their eggs were addle
Soon ev'ry father bird and mother
Grew quarrelſome, and peck'd each other,
Parted without the leaſt regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learn'd, in future, to be wiſer,
Than to neglect a good adviſer.

INSTRUCTION.

Miſſes! the tale that I relate
This leſſon ſeems to carry—
Chooſe not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field through which I often paſs,
Thick overſpread with moſs and ſilky graſs,
Adjoining cloſe to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapleſs brood,
Reſerv'd to ſolace many a neighb'ring 'ſquire,
That he may follow them through brake and briar,
Contuſion hazarding of neck or ſpine,
Which rural gentlemen call ſport divine.
A narrow brook, by ruſhy banks conceal'd,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
Oaks interſperſe it, that had once a head,
But now wear crefts of oven-wood inſtead;
And where the land ſlopes to its wat'ry bourn,
Wide yawns a gulph beſide a ragged thorn;
Bricks line the ſides, but ſhiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow ſcoop'd, I judge in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry gueſt, is fed;
Nor autumn yet had bruſh'd from ev'ry ſpray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;
But corn was hous'd, and beans were in the ſtack,
Now, therefore, iſſued forth the ſpotted pack,
With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and thro
With a whole gamut fill'd of heav'nly notes,
For which, alas! my deſtiny ſevere,
Though ears ſhe gave me two, gave me no ear.

The ſun, accompliſhing his early march,
His lamp now planted on heav'n's topmoſt arch,
When, exerciſe and air my only aim,
And heedleſs whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthleſs joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high-rais'd horn's melodious clang
All Kilwick * and all Dingle-derry * rang.

Sheep graz'd the field; ſome with ſoft boſom pre
The herb as ſoft, while nibbling ſtray'd the reſt;
Nor noiſe was heard but of the haſty brook,
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
All ſeem'd ſo peaceful, that from them convey'd
To me, their peace by kind contagion ſpread.

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Eſq.

But when the huntſman, with diſtended cheek,
'Gan make his inſtrument of muſic ſpeak,
And from within the wood that craſh was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burſt appear'd,
The ſheep recumbent, and the ſheep that graz'd,
All huddling into phalanx, ſtood and gaz'd,
Admiring, terrified, the novel ſtrain,
Then cours'd the field around, and cours'd it round again;
But, recollecting with a ſudden thought,
That flight in circles urg'd advanc'd them nought,
They gather'd cloſe around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to ſolitude accuſtom'd long,
Perceives in ev'ry thing that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but ſhrubs and trees,
Have ſpeech for him, and underſtood with eaſe;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all;
Knows what the freſhneſs of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largeneſs of the ſkies;
But, with preciſion nicer ſtill, the mind
He ſcans of ev'ry loco-motive kind;
Birds of all feather, beaſts of ev'ry name,
That ſerve mankind, or ſhun them, wild or tame;
The looks and geſtures of their griefs and fears
Have, all, articulation in his ears;

He ſpells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no gloſſary to ſet him right.
This truth premis'd was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.
Awhile they mus'd; ſurveying ev'ry face,
Thou hadſt ſuppos'd them of ſuperior race;
Their periwigs of wool, and fears combin'd,
Stamp'd on each countenance ſuch marks of mind,
That ſage they ſeem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at laſt they puzzle out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton, ſtatelier than the reſt,
A ram, the ewes and wethers, ſad, addreſs'd.
Friends! we have liv'd too long. I never heard
Sounds ſuch as theſe, ſo worthy to be fear'd.
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at laſt a vent,
And from their priſon-houſe below ariſe,
With all theſe hideous howlings to the ſkies,
I could be much compos'd, nor ſhould appear
For ſuch a cauſe to feel the ſlighteſt fear.
Yourſelves have ſeen, what time the thunders roll'd
All night, me reſting quiet in the fold.
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;

Should deem it by our old companion made,
The aſs; for he, we know, has lately ſtray'd,
And being loſt, perhaps, and wand'ring wide,
Might be ſuppos'd to clamour for a guide.
But ah! thoſe dreadful yells what ſoul can hear,
That owns a carcaſe, and not quake for fear?
Dæmons produce them doubtleſs, brazen-claw'd
And fang'd with braſs the dæmons are abroad;
I hold it, therefore, wiſeſt and moſt fit,
That, life to ſave, we leap into the pit.

Him anſwer'd then his loving mate and true,
But more diſcreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

How? leap into the pit our life to ſave?
To ſave our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it leſs? Contemplate firſt
The depth how awful! falling there, we burſt;
Or ſhould the brambles, interpos'd, our fall
In part abate, that happineſs were ſmall;
For with a race like theirs no chance I ſee
Of peace or eaſe to creatures clad as we.
Meantime, noiſe kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whoſe it may,
And ruſh thoſe other ſounds, that ſeem by tongues
Of dæmons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but ſounds, and till the cauſe appear
We have at leaſt commodious ſtanding here.

Come, fiend, come, fury, giant, monſter, blaſt
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at laſt.
While thus ſhe ſpake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, cloſe attended at his heels,
By panting dog, tir'd man, and ſpatter'd horſe,
Through mere good fortune, took a diff'rent courſe.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the ſilly ſheep had found
Such cauſe of terror in an empty ſound,
So ſweet to huntſman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of deſp'rate ſteps. The darkeſt day
(Live till to-morrow) will have paſs'd away.

DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

ıoon was ſhady, and ſoft airs
ɔt Ouſe's ſilent tide,
. ſcap'd from literary cares,
nder'd on his ſide.

ıniel, prettieſt of his race,
. high in pedigree,
nymphs *, adorn'd with ev'ry grace,
ıt ſpaniel found for me)

ɾanton'd loſt in flags and reeds,
v ſtarting into ſight
ɔd the ſwallow o'er the meads
h ſcarce a flower flight.

the time when Ouſe diſplay'd
lilies newly blown;
beauties I intent ſurvey'd,
l one I wiſh'd my own.

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

With cane extended far I ſought
To ſteer it cloſe to land;
But ſtill the prize, though nearly caught,
Eſcap'd my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unſucceſsful pains
With fixt conſid'rate face,
And puzzling ſat his puppy brains
To comprehend the caſe.

But with a chirrup clear and ſtrong,
Diſperſing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the ſtream.

My ramble finiſh'd, I return'd.
Beau trotting far before
The floating wreath again diſcern'd,
And plunging left the ſhore.

I ſaw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient ſwim to meet
My quick approach, and ſoon he dropp'd
[redacted] treaſure at my feet.

Charm'd with the ſight, the world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed,
My dog ſhall mortify the pride
Of man's ſuperior breed;

But, chief, myſelf I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To ſhow a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

ON THE RECEIPT OF

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

OUT OF NORFOLK.

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN ANN BODHAM.

Oh that thoſe lips had language! Life has paſs'd
With me but roughly ſince I heard thee laſt.
Thoſe lips are thine—thy own ſweet ſmiles I ſee,
The ſame that oft in childhood ſolaced me;
Voice only fails, elſe, how diſtinct they ſay,
"Grieve not, my child, chaſe all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of thoſe dear eyes
(Bleſt be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here ſhines on me ſtill the ſame.
Faithful remembrancer of one ſo dear,
Oh welcome gueſt, though unexpected, here!
Who bidd'ſt me honour with an artleſs ſong,
Affectionate, a mother loſt ſo long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy ſhall weave a charm for my relief—

Shall ſteep me in Elyſian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art ſhe.
My mother! when I learn'd that thou waſt dead,
Say, waſt thou conſcious of the tears I ſhed?
Hover'd thy ſpirit o'er thy ſorrowing ſon,
Wretch even then, life's journey juſt begun?
Perhaps thou gav'ſt me, though unſeen, a kiſs;
Perhaps a tear, if ſouls can weep in bliſs—
Ah that maternal ſmile! it anſwers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I ſaw the hearſe that bore thee ſlow away,
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
A long, long ſigh, and wept a laſt adieu!
But was it ſuch?—It was—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a ſound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful ſhore,
The parting ſound ſhall paſs my lips no more!
Thy maidens griev'd themſelves at my concern,
Oft gave me promiſe of a quick return.
What ardently I wiſh'd, I long believ'd,
And, diſappointed ſtill, was ſtill deceiv'd;
By diſappointment every day beguiled,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a ſad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my ſtock of infant ſorrows ſpent,
I learn'd at laſt ſubmiſſion to my lot,
But, though I leſs deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor;
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,
Drew me to ſchool along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
In ſcarlet mantle warm, and velvet capt,
'Tis now become a hiſtory little known,
That once we call'd the paſt'ral houſe our own.
Short liv'd poſſeſſion! but the record fair,
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindneſs there,
Still outlives many a ſtorm that has effac'd
A thouſand other themes leſs deeply trac'd.
Thy nightly viſits to my chamber made,
That thou might'ſt know me ſafe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biſcuit or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks beſtow'd,
By thy own hand, till freſh they ſhone and glow'd;
All this, and, more endearing ſtill than all,
Thy conſtant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by thoſe cataracts and breaks
That humour interpos'd too often makes;
All this ſtill legible in mem'ry's page,
And ſtill to be ſo, to my lateſt age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;

Perhaps a frail memorial, but ſincere,
Not ſcorn'd in heaven, though little notic'd here.
Could time, his flight revers'd, reſtore the hours
When playing with thy veſture's tiſſued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jaſſamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
(And thou waſt happier than myſelf the while,
Would'ſt ſoftly ſpeak, and ſtroke my head and ſmile)
Could thoſe few pleaſant hours again appear,
Might one wiſh bring them, would I wiſh them here?
I would not truſt my heart—the dear delight
Seems ſo to be deſir'd, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is ſuch,
So little to be lov'd, and thou ſo much,
That I ſhould ill requite thee to conſtrain
Thy unbound ſpirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coaſt
(The ſtorms all weather'd and the ocean croſs'd)
Shoots into port at ſome well-haven'd iſle,
Where ſpices breathe and brighter ſeaſons ſmile,
There ſits quieſcent on the floods that ſhow
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incenſe play
Around her, fanning light her ſtreamers gay;
So thou, with ſails how ſwift! haſt reach'd the ſhore
"Where tempeſts never beat nor billows roar*,"

* Garth.

And thy loved conſort on the dang'rous tide
Of life, long ſince, has anchor'd at thy ſide.
But me, ſcarce hoping to attain that reſt,
Always from port withheld, always diſtreſs'd—
Me howling winds drive devious, tempeſt toſs'd,
Sails ript, ſeams op'ning wide, and compaſs loſt,
And day by day ſome current's thwarting force
Sets me more diſtant from a proſperous courſe.
But oh the thought, that thou art ſafe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boaſt is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthron'd and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretenſions riſe—
The ſon of parents paſs'd into the ſkies.
And now, farewell—time, unrevok'd, has run
His wonted courſe, yet what I wiſh'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not ſought in vain,
I ſeem t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the ſin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of fancy ſtill are free,
And I can view this mimic ſhew of thee,
Time has but half ſucceeded in his theft—
Thyſelf removed, thy power to ſoothe me left.

THE

DIVERTING HISTORY

OF

JOHN GILPIN;

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
  Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
  Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's ſpouſe ſaid to her dear—
  Though wedded we have been
Theſe twice ten tedious years, yet we
  No holiday have ſeen.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig!
He loft them fooner than at firft—
For why?—they were too big!

Now, miftrefs Gilpin, when fhe faw
Her hufband pofting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth fhe faid
That drove them to the Bell—
This fhall be your's when you bring back
My hufband fafe and well.

The youth did ride, and foon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to ftop,
By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted fteed he frighted more
And made him fafter run.

n kiſs'd his loving wife;
d was he to find
ugh on pleaſure ſhe was bent,
d a frugal mind.

rning came, the chaiſe was brought,
et was not allow'd
e up to the door, left all
ld ſay that ſhe was proud.

ree doors off the chaiſe was ſtay'd,
here they did all get in;
recious ſouls, and all agog
o daſh through thick and thin!

ack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk ſo glad,
he ſtones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapſide were mad.

John Gilpin at his horſe's ſide
Seiz'd faſt the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haſte to ride,
But ſoon came down again;

For ſaddle-tree ſcarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he ſaw
Three cuſtomers come in.

So down he came; for loſs of time,
Although it griev'd him ſore;
Yet loſs of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the cuſtomers
Were ſuited to their mind,
When Betty ſcreaming came down ſtairs—
"The wine is left behind!"

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewiſe,
In which I bear my truſty ſword
When I do exerciſe.

Now miſtreſs Gilpin (careful ſoul!)
Had two ſtone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that ſhe lov'd,
And keep it ſafe and ſound.

John Gilpin kiſs'd his loving wife;
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, though on pleaſure ſhe was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaiſe was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, leſt all
Should ſay that ſhe was proud.

So three doors off the chaiſe was ſtay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious ſouls, and all agog
To daſh through thick and thin!

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk ſo glad,
The ſtones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapſide were mad.

John Gilpin at his horſe's ſide
Seiz'd faſt the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haſte to ride,
But ſoon came down again;

So, ſtooping down, as needs he muſt
Who cannot ſit upright,
He graſp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horſe, who never in that ſort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig!—
He little dreamt, when he ſet out,
Of running ſuch a rig!

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like ſtreamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At laſt it flew away.

Then might all people well diſcern
The bottles he had ſlung;
A bottle ſwinging at each ſide,
As hath been ſaid or ſung.

The dogs did bark, the children ſcream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And ev'ry ſoul cried out—Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame ſoon ſpread around—
He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thouſand pound!

And ſtill, as faſt as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were ſhatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Moſt piteous to be ſeen,
Which made his horſe's flanks to ſmoke
As they had baſted been.

But ſtill he ſeem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle brac'd;
For all might ſee the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waiſt.

Thus all through merry Iſlington
Theſe gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton ſo gay,

And there he threw the waſh about
On both ſides of the way,
Juſt like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild gooſe at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony ſpied
Her tender huſband, wond'ring much
To ſee how he did ride.

Stop, ſtop, John Gilpin!—Here's the houſe—
They all at once did cry;
The dinner waits, and we are tir'd:
Said Gilpin—So am I!

But yet his horſe was not a whit
Inclin'd to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a houſe
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow ſwift he flew,
Shot by an archer ſtrong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my ſong.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And ſore againſt his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horſe at laſt ſtood ſtill.

The calender, amaz'd to ſee
His neighbour in ſuch trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accoſted him:—

What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you muſt and ſhall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all.

Now Gilpin had a pleaſant wit,
And lov'd a timely joke!
And thus unto the calender
In merry guiſe he ſpoke:—

I came becauſe your horſe would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will ſoon be here—
They are upon the road.

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a ſingle word,
But to the houſe went in;

Whence ſtraight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worſe for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and, in his turn,
Thus ſhow'd his ready wit—
My head is twice as big as your's,
They therefore needs muſt fit.

t Gilpin, and away
ɔft-boy at his heels!—
oy's horſe right glad to miſs
ıb'ring of the wheels.

ıen upon the road,
:ing Gilpin fly,
boy ſcamp'ring in the rear,
s'd the hue and cry:—

ſtop thief!—a highwayman!
of them was mute;
ł each that paſs'd that way
in the purſuit.

he turnpike gates again
:n in ſhort ſpace;
.en thinking, as before,
lpin rode a race.

did—and won it too!—
ot firſt to town;
l till where he had got up
ıgain get down.

Now let us ſing—Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to ſee!

THE YEARLY DISTRESS,

OR

TITHING TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

Verſes addreſſed to a Country Clergyman complaining of the diſagreeableneſs of the day annually appointed for receiving the Dues at the Parſonage.

Come, ponder well, for 'tis no jeſt,
To laugh it would be wrong,
The troubles of a worthy prieſt,
The burden of my ſong.

This prieſt he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of the year,
But oh! it cuts him like a ſcythe
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a figh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In ſooth, the ſorrow of ſuch days
Is not to be expreſs'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike diſtreſs'd.

Now all, unwelcome, at his gates
The clumſy ſwains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the ſight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Inſtead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a ſcore.

'And how does miſs and madam do,
'The little boy and all?'
'All tight and well. And how do you,
'Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?'

The dinner comes, and down they ſit:
Were e'er ſuch hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his noſe upon his ſleeve,
One ſpits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpiſh ſtill as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the buſy time begins.
'Come, neighbours, we muſt wag—'
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of froſt,
And one of ſtorms of hail,
And one of pigs that he has loſt
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, 'A rarer man than you
'In pulpit none ſhall hear:
'But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
'You ſell it plaguy dear.'

Oh, why are farmers made ſo coarſe,
Or clergy made ſo fine!
A kick that ſcarce would move a horſe
May kill a ſound divine.

Then let the boobies ſtay at home;
'Twould coſt him, I dare ſay,
Leſs trouble taking twice the ſum,
Without the clowns that pay.

Lines addreſſed to
DR. DARWIN.
AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two Poets,* (poets, by report,
Not oft ſo well agree)
Sweet harmoniſt of Flora's court!
Conſpire to honour thee.

They beſt can judge a poet's worth
Who oft themſelves have known,
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labours of their own.

We, therefore, pleas'd, extol thy ſong,
Though various yet complete,
Rich in embelliſhment, as ſtrong
And learn'd as it is ſweet.

No envy mingles with our praiſe,
Though could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would, they muſt, at thine.

* Alluding to the poem by Mr. Hayley, which accompa-
nies this.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendſhip's cloſeſt tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundic'd eye;

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,
And howſoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
Unworthy of his own.

ON

MRS. MONTAGUE'S

FEATHER-HANGINGS.

THE birds put off their ev'ry hue
To dreſs a room for Montague.
The Peacock ſends his heav'nly dyes,
His *rainbows* and his *ſtarry eyes*;
The Pheaſant plumes, which round infold
His mantling neck with downy gold;
The Cock his arch'd tail's azure ſhow,
And, river-blanch'd, the Swan, his ſnow.

Whate'er they boaſt of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Pro[illegible] to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither daſhing ſhow'r
Nor blaſts that ſhake the dripping bow
Shall drench again or diſcompoſe,
But ſcreen'd from ev'ry ſtorm that blo
It boaſts a ſplendour ev r new,
Safe with protecting Montague.

To the ſame patroneſs reſort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whoſe forge of th
Forms riſe, to quick perfection wrough
Which, though new-born, with vigour

A man that to which he keeps confin'd
The various treaſures of his mind—
All theſe to Montague's repair,
Ambitious of a ſhelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For ſtormy troubles loudeſt roar
Around their flight who higheſt ſoar)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine ſafe without a fear to fade.
She thus maintains divided ſway
With yon bright Regent of the day;
The Plume and Poet both we know
Their luſtre to his influence owe;
And ſhe the works of Pa-

SONNET

ADDRESSED TO

HENRY COWPER, Esq.

On his emphatical and intereſting Delivery of the Defence of Warren Haſtings, Eſq. in the Houſe of Lords.

COWPER, whoſe ſilver voice, taſk'd ſometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears
(Attentive when thou read'ſt) of England's peers,
Let verſe at length yield thee thy juſt reward.
Thou waſt not heard with drowſy diſregard,
Expending late on all that length of plea
Thy gen'rous pow'rs, but ſilence honour'd thee
Mute as e'er gaz'd on orator or bard.
Thou art not voice alone, but haſt beſide
Both heart and head; and could'ſt with muſic ſweet
Of attic phraſe and ſenatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
Thy fame diffuſe, prais'd not for utt'rance meet
Of *others'* ſpeech, but magic of *thy own.*

THE

MORNING DREAM,

'Twas in the glad ſeaſon of ſpring,
  Aſleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but ſing,
  So pleaſant it ſeem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that on ocean afloat,
  Far hence to the weſtward I ſail'd,
While the billows high-lifted the boat,
  And the freſh-blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the ſteerage a woman I ſaw,
  Such at leaſt was the form that ſhe wore,
Whoſe beauty impreſs'd me with awe,
  Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She ſat, and a ſhield at her ſide
  Shed light like a ſun on the waves,
And ſmiling divinely, ſhe cry'd—
  "I go to make Freemen of Slaves."—

is liberty only

Swiftly dividing the flood,
o a slave-cultur'd island we came,
ere a demon, her enemy, stood—
Oppression his terrible name.
his hand, as the sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land
That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And the moment the monster expir'd
Heard shouts that ascended the sky
From thousands with rapture inspir'd.

VERSES

Printed at the Bottom of the

YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY

OF THE TOWN OF NORTHAMPTON,

Dec. 21, 1787.

Pallida Mors æquo pulſat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres.

Pale Death with equal foot ſtrikes wide the door
Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

While thirteen moons ſaw ſmoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All *theſe*, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home—the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine, or did plague prevail,
That ſo much death appears?

No; theſe were vigorous as their ſires,
Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waves his claim.

Like crowded foreſt trees we ſtand,
And ſome are mark'd to fall;
The axe will ſmite at God's command,
And ſoon ſhall ſmite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtleſs, have I ſeen;
I paſs'd—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth
With which I charge my page;
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.

No preſent health can health in
For yet an hour to come;
No med'cine, though it often c
Can always balk the tomb.

And oh! that (humble as my l
And ſcorn'd as is my ſtrain *
Theſe truths, though known, to
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk, with all h
And, ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* pa
And anſwer all—Amen!

* John Cox, Parish Clerk.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR ——.

—Placidiq; ibi demum morte quievit. *Virg.*
Then calm at length he breath'd his ſoul away.

" On moſt delightful hour by man
" Experienc'd here below;
" The hour that terminates his ſpan,
" His folly and his woe.

" Worlds ſhould not bribe me back to tread
" Again life's dreary waſte;
" To ſee my days again o'erſpread
" With all the gloomy paſt.

" My home, henceforth, is in the ſkies,
" Earth, ſeas, and ſun adieu;
" All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
" I have no ſight for you."

Thus ſpake Aſpatio, firm poſſeſt
Of faith's ſupporting rod;
Then breath'd his ſoul into its reſt,
The boſom of his God.

was a man among the few
incere on Virtue's ſide,
d all his ſtrength from ſcripture drew,
To hourly uſe apply'd

hat rule he priz'd, by that he fear'd,
He hated, hop'd, and lov'd,
for ever frown'd, or ſad appear'd,
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
And evil felt within,
But when he felt it, heav'd a ſigh,
And loath'd the thought of ſin.

Such liv'd Aſpatio, and at laſt,
Call'd up from earth to heav'n,
The gulph of death triumphant paſs'd,
By gales of bleſſing driven.

His joys be MINE, each reader cries,
When my laſt hour arrives:
They ſhall be yours, my verse replies,
Such ONLY be your lives.

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE TOMB OF

Mr. HAMILTON.

Pause here, and think; a monitory rhime
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein,
Seems it to say—Health, here, has long to reig
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight? an heart untaught to fig
Yet fear. Youth, ofttimes, healthful and at
Anticipates a day it never sees,
And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud
Exclaims, "Prepare thee for an early shrou

THE POPLAR FIELD.

The poplars are felled, farewell to the ſhade
And the whiſpering ſound of the cool colonnade,
The winds play no longer and ſing in the leaves,
Nor Ouſe on his boſom their image receives.

Twelve years have elaps'd ſince I laſt took a view
Of my favourite field and the bank where they g
And now in the graſs behold they are laid,
And the tree is my ſeat that once lent me a ſhad

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a ſcreen from the h
And the ſcene where his melody charm'd me bef
Reſounds with his ſweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all haſting away,
And I muſt ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breaſt and a ſtone at my head
Ere another ſuch grove ſhall ariſe in its ſtead.

'Tis a ſight to engage me, if any thing can,
To muſe on the periſhing pleaſures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I
Have a being leſs durable even than he.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM

Populeæ cecidit gratiſſima copia ſilvæ,
Conticuêre ſuſurri, omniſque evanuit umbra.
Nullæ jam levibus ſe miſcent frondibus auræ
Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi! bis ſenos dum luctû torqueor annos
His cogor ſilvis ſuetoque carere receſſû,
Cum ſerò rediens ſtrataſque in gramine cernens
Inſedi arboribus ſub queîs errare ſolebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus? Felicior illum
Silva tegit, duræ nondum permiſſa bipenni;
Scilicet exuſtos colles campoſque patentes
Odit, et indignans et non rediturus abivit.

Sed qui ſucciſas doleo ſuccidar et ipſe,
Et priùs huic parilis quàm creverit altera ſilva
Flebor, et, exequiis parvis donatus, habebo
Defixum lapidem tumulique cubantis acervum.

Tam ſubitò periiſſe videns tam digna manere
Agnoſco humanas ſortes et triſtia fata—
Sit licàt ipſe brevis, volucrique ſimillimus umbræ,
Eſt homini brevior citiùſque obitura voluptas.

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er purſue,
Nor ſwifter greyhound follow,
Whoſe foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntſman's hallo',

Old Tiney, ſurlieſt of his kind,
Who, nurs'd with tender care,
And to domeſtic bounds confin'd,
Was ſtill a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance ev'ry night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread
And milk, and oats, and ſtraw;
Thiſtles, or lettuces inſtead,
With ſand to ſcour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regal'd,
On pippins' ruſſet peel,
And, when his juicy ſalads fail'd,
Slic'd carrot pleas'd him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn
Whereon he lov'd to bound,
To ſkip and gambol like a fawn,
And ſwing his rump around.

His friſking was at evening hours,
For then he loſt his fear,
But moſt before approaching ſhow'rs,
Or when a ſtorm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus ſaw ſteal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And ev'ry night at play.

I kept him for his humour' ſake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a ſmile.

But now, beneath this walnut ſhade
He finds his long, laſt home,
And waits, in ſnug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puſs ſhall come.

He, ſtill more aged, feels the ſhocks
From which no care can ſave,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Muſt ſoon partake his grave.

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet
Qui totum novennium vixit
Puſs.
Siſte pauliſper
Qui præteriturus es
Et tecum ſic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus
Nec plumbum miſſile
Nec laqueus
Nec imbres nimii
Confecêre
Tamen mortuus eſt—
Et moriar ego.

Note to Line 7, Page 85.

In the year 1774, being much indiſpoſed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myſelf either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made ſome diverſion neceſſary, I was glad of any thing that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Underſtanding better how to teaſe the poor creature than to feed it, and, ſoon becoming weary of their charge, they readily conſented that their father, who ſaw it pining and growing leaner every day, ſhould offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the priſoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of ſuch an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I ſhould find juſt that ſort of employment which my caſe required. It was ſoon known among the neighbours that I was pleaſed with the preſent; and the conſequence was, that in a ſhort time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have ſtocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is neceſſary that I ſhould here diſtin-

guiſh by the names I gave them—Puſs, Tiney, and Beſs. Notwithſtanding the two feminine appellatives, I muſt inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houſes to ſleep in; each had a ſeparate apartment, ſo contrived that their ordure would paſs through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatſoever fell, which being duly emptied and waſhed, they were thus kept perfectly ſweet and clean. In the day-time they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puſs grew preſently familiar, would leap into my lap, raiſe himſelf upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would ſuffer me to take him up and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen faſt aſleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nurſed him, kept him apart from his fellows that they might not moleſt him (for, like many other wild animals, they perſecute one of their own ſpecies that is ſick), and by conſtant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, reſtored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a ſentiment which he moſt ſignificantly

expreſſed by licking my hand, firſt the back of it, then the palm, then every finger ſeparately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unſaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a ſimilar occaſion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my cuſtom to carry him always after breakfaſt into the garden, where he hid himſelf generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, ſleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves alſo of that vine he found a favourite repaſt. I had not long habituated him to this taſte of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of ſuch expreſſion as it was not poſſible to miſinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately ſucceed, he would take the ſkirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull at it with all his force. Thus Puſs might be ſaid to be perfectly tamed, the ſhyneſs of his nature was done away, and, on the whole, it was viſible, by many ſymptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human ſociety than when ſhut up with his natural companions.

Not ſo Tiney; upon him the kindeſt treatment had not the leaſt effect. He too was ſick, and in his

eſs had an equal ſhare of my attention; but if, his recovery, I took the liberty to ſtroke him, would grunt, ſtrike with his fore feet, ſpring forard, and bite. He was, however, very entertaining in his way; even his ſurlineſs was matter of mirth, and in his play he preſerved ſuch an air of gravity, and performed his feats with ſuch a ſolemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Beſs, who died ſoon after he was full grown, and whoſe death was occaſioned by his being turned into his box, which had been waſhed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Puſs was tamed by gentle uſage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Beſs had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after ſupper, when the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would friſk, and bound, and play a thouſand gambols, in which Beſs, being remarkably ſtrong and fearleſs, was always ſuperior to the reſt, and proved himſelf the Veſtris of the party. One evening the cat being in the room, had the hardineſs to pat Beſs upon the cheek, an indignity which he reſented by drumming upon her back with ſuch violence, that

the cat was happy to eſcape from under his paws and hide herſelf.

I deſcribe theſe animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in *fact*, and their countenances were ſo expreſſive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is ſaid, that a ſhepherd, however numerous his flock, ſoon becomes ſo familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, diſtinguiſh each from all the reſt; and yet, to a common obſerver, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the ſame diſcrimination in the caſt of countenances would be diſcoverable in hares, and am perſuaded that among a thouſand of them no two could be found exactly ſimilar; a circumſtance little ſuſpected by thoſe who have not had opportunity to obſerve it. Theſe creatures have a ſingular ſagacity in diſcovering the minuteſt alteration that is made in the place to which they are accuſtomed, and inſtantly apply their noſe to the examination of a new object. A ſmall hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny. They ſeem, too, to be very much directed by the ſmell in the choice of their favourites: *to ſome perſons*, though they ſaw them daily, they

e reconciled, and would even ſcream
empted to touch them; but a miller
gaged their affections at once; his
: had charms that were irreſiſtible.
ıder that my intimate acquaintance
cimens of the kind has taught me to
ſman's amuſement in abhorrence; he
hat amiable creatures he perſecutes, of
e they are capable, how cheerful they
irits, what enjoyment they have of life,
reſſed as they ſeem with a peculiar
, it is only becauſe man gives them
for it.

/ not be tedious, I will juſt give a ſhort
ıoſe articles of diet that ſuit them beſt.
ı be a general opinion that they graze,
roneous one, at leaſt graſs is not their
ſeem rather to uſe it medicinally, ſoon
r leaves of almoſt any kind. Sow-
le-lion, and lettuce, are their favourite
ſpecially the laſt. I diſcovered by ac-
fine white ſand is in great eſtimation
I ſuppoſe as a digeſtive. It happened
leaning a bird-cage while the hares were
placed a pot filled with ſuch ſand upon
ich being at once directed to by a ſtrong

inſtinct, they devoured voraciouſly; ſince that
have generally taken care to ſee them well f
with it. They account green corn a delicac
blade and ſtalk, but the ear they ſeldom eat: t
any kind, eſpecially wheat-ſtraw, is another
dainties; they will feed greedily upon oats,
furniſhed with clean ſtraw never want them;
them alſo for a bed, and, if ſhaken up daily,
kept ſweet and dry for a conſiderable time.
do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but wil
ſmall quantity of them with great reliſh,
particularly fond of the plant called muſk; th
to reſemble ſheep in this, that, if their paſture
ſucculent, they are very ſubject to the rot;
vent which, I always made bread their princi
riſhment, and filling a pan with it cut int
ſquares, placed it every evening in their ch
for they feed only at evening and in the night:
the winter, when vegetables were not to be
mingled this meſs of bread with ſhreds of
adding to it the rind of apples cut extremel
for, though they are fond of the paring, th
itſelf diſguſts them. Theſe, however, not
ſufficient ſubſtitute for the juice of ſummer
they muſt at this time be ſupplied with wate
ſo placed that they cannot overſet it into the

I muſt not omit that occaſionally they are
pleaſed with twigs of hawthorn, and of the c
briar, eating even the very wood when it is
ſiderable thickneſs.

Beſs, I have ſaid, died young; Tiney liv
nine years old, and died at laſt, I have reaſon to
of ſome hurt in his loins by a fall; Puſs is
ing, and has juſt completed his tenth year, di
ing no ſigns of decay, nor even of age, exce
he is grown more diſcreet and leſs frolickſon
he was. I cannot conclude without obſervin
I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaint
ſpaniel that had never ſeen a hare to a hare th
never ſeen a ſpaniel. I did it with great c
but there was no real need of it. Puſs diſ
no token of fear, nor Marquis the leaſt ſymp
hoſtility. There is therefore, it ſhould ſeem,
tural antipathy between dog and hare, but the
of the one occaſions the flight of the othe
the dog purſues becauſe he is trained to it:
eat bread at the ſame time out of the ſame
and are in all reſpects ſociable and friendly.

I ſhould not do complete juſtice to my ſubj
I not add, that they have no ill ſcent belong
them, that they are indefatigably nice in k
themſelves clean, for which purpoſe nature

ith a bruſh under each foot; and that
infeſted by any vermin.

28, 1784.

um found among Mr. Cowper's papers.

Tueſday, March 9, 1786.

ay died poor Puſs, aged eleven years eleven
She died between twelve and one at noon,
old age, and apparently without pain.

THE END.

Preſs, and will be publiſhed in Auguſt 1801,
in four Volumes in Octavo,

A Tranſlation of the

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W. COWPER, of the Inner Temple, Eſq.

nd Edition, with ſo many alterations as nea
title it to be called a new Tranſlation.

d for J. Johnſon, St. Paul's Church-yard

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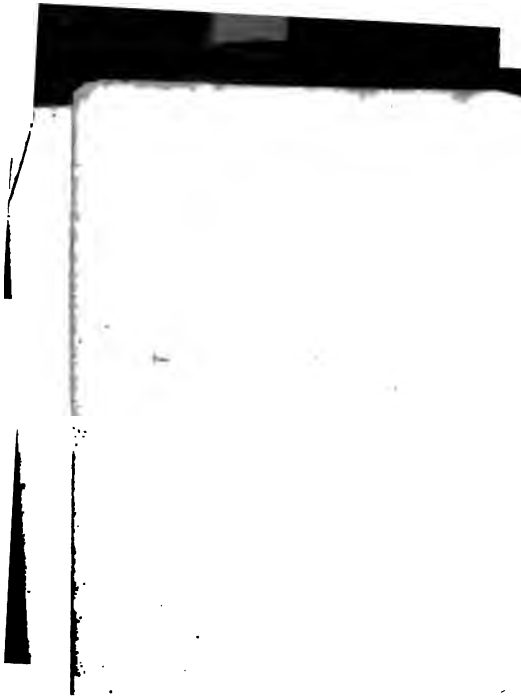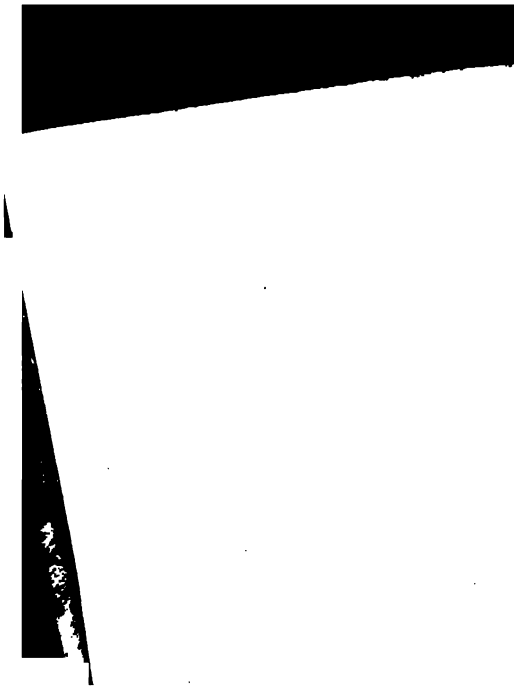
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